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THE

CHRISTIAN'S CONSOLATIONS

AGAINST

THE FEARS OF DEATH:

WITH

SEASONABLE PRAYERS AND MEDITATIONS,

AND

DIRECTIONS FOR PREPARING HIM TO DIE WELL.

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BY

CHARLES DRELINCOURT,

LATE REVEREND DIVINE OF THE PROTESTANT CHURCH OF PARIS.

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED

THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR; AND HIS BEHAVIOUR IN HIS LAST MOMENTS:

TOGETHER WITH

A True Relation of the Apparition of Mrs Veal, after her Death, to Mrs Bargrave, earnestly recommending the Perusal of "Drelincourt's Christian's Consolations."

Kay's Second American Edition.

PHILADELPHIA:

JAMES KAY, JUN. & BROTHER, 122 CHESTNUT STREET.

PITTSBURGH: JOHN I. KAY & CO.

1836.

the printed relation prefixed to this book. To reject all narratives of this kind as fictitious, argues, in my judgment, as great an error, weakness and prejudice, as to believe all that is reported of apparitions. This comes to us clothed with all the appearance and circumstances of truth, reasonably to be expected. To confirm the possibility and truth of some apparitions, none can deny, that by this means our good God has conveyed and confirmed to us several of the mysteries of our holy religion; as the conception, birth, incarnation, resurrection, and glorious ascension of our great Messiah, by the apparition of angels. And how often those heavenly spirits were formerly visible in human shapes for the advantage, information and safeguard of the pious, the word of God sufficiently declares. Now, as we live in such an incredulous age, that will not believe God and his divine oracles, though attested by the working of miracles, concerning the future state of the righteous and wicked, but requires a new testimony and evidence, as the return of souls from the dead, to bear witness to the happiness of heaven, the torments of hell, and the immortality of the soul: Who knows, but to render men more inexcusable, God may condescend, that a departed soul, or its good angel in its stead, may appear to declare these infallible and undoubted truths to an unbelieving world? But we find by experience, that this kind of evidence is far more liable to exceptions as uncertain and fabulous, than the sacred methods that our wise God hath taken to persuade men to the divine doctrines of our salvation: As Abraham declares in the parable of the rich glutton, condemned to the flames of hell, "If they they will not believe Moses and the prophets"—we may with more reason add, if they will not believe Christ and his apostles, and so many wonderful miracles attesting God's omnipotency and revelations from above—"neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the Dead."

How serviceable this work may be to divines in funeral sermons, in visiting the sick, the poor and afflicted, and how proper to be left as legacies to surviving friends, at funerals, I leave to others to judge, who shall sincerely desire to promote the salvation of souls. I have no more to add: But I beseech our merciful and heavenly Father, to grant us all the grace, the faith, and Christian resolution, that we may not fear death, nor its consequences; but may be always ready prepared and provided to embrace it with joy and submission to the pleasure of God, whenever our Almighty Creator and Redeemer shall think fit to summon us, and take us to himself.

THE TRANSLATOR.

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LIFE OF THE AUTHOR;

AND HIS BEHAVIOUR IN HIS LAST MOMENTS.

This illustrious person (for what is more illustrious than true piety?) was born on the 10th of July 1595, at Sedan, where his father, whose name was Peter Drelincourt, a gentleman of good family, had a considerable post, being at first secretary to Henry Robert de la Mark, duke of Buillon and sovereign prince of Sedan, and afterwards chosen register of the supreme council of that city. His mother was no less worthily descended, being the daughter of Nicholas Buyrette, advocate in the parliament of Paris, of whom we find it related (from a manuscript life of our author), that having embraced the reformed religion, he was followed therein by his wife and children, with so much zeal, that Thomas Buyrette, his eldest son, is reckoned among the glorious company of the protestant martyrs; and James Buyrette, his second son, having devoted himself to the ministry, would have been elected one of the pastors of the church at Paris, if he had not died the same week that was appointed for his ordination.

As this exemplary piety in his mother's family reflects so much honour upon our author, I hope the reader will not think me too circumstantial, if I take notice in this place that his aforesaid uncle, Thomas Buyrette, was but nineteen years of age, when, by the advice of Calvin and his colleagues, he undertook the office of a minister, which he exercised with great reputation at Lyons, for some years, till the storms of persecution arising, he was obliged to retire to Geneva; but not finding any comfort, except in the discharge of his duty, he was soon after sent to Besançon; where God was pleased to give such a blessing to his labours, as to enable him to

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settle a church privately, and to advance the kingdom of Christ in a wonderful manner.

After he had been here some time, his mother not having seen him since he became a minister, and being passionately desirous of a visit from him, he took a journey to Paris the year of the massacre, where he fell, the third day of that dreadful slaughter, into the hands of the murderers; who having learned from him his religion and function, put him to death in a most cruel manner, together with John Mole, the husband of Mary Buyrette, his eldest sister, and inhumanly dragged both their bodies into the river.

His mother narrowly escaped the same fate, by a kind of miracle, and immediately retired to Sedan, with the rest of her children, whom she carefully educated in the fear of God. The youngest of these was a posthumous daughter, who was afterwards the mother of our Charles Drelincourt.

To return to our author, he passed through the study of polite literature and divinity at Sedan; after which he was sent to Saumur to go through a course of philosophy there, under professor Duncan; at both which places he acquitted himself in such a manner as to gain the admiration and love of all who knew him.

Having thus finished his preparatory studies in the beginning of June 1618, he was admitted minister, and received imposition of hands in the castle of Precigni; after which, he went to discharge the duties of his function near Langres, whither he was called upon the following occasion.

It being thought that a church might be founded at the gates of Langres, as in a bailiwick, those who endeavoured to establish it were very pressing with Mr Drelincourt to undertake the care of this rising church; which he readily accepted; and because he was assured there was a prospect of a considerable harvest in those parts, preferred the offer to all the others that were then made him. For though at that time he was but twenty-two years and some months old, he had the good fortune to be desired by many churches of the kingdom, and even by some of the most considerable foreign churches.

Accordingly, when he came to Langres, he was filled with abundant hopes; for he found in that city a great number of people who only seemed to wait for an opportunity of declaring themselves; and in the country, he saw the people so well disposed to embrace the purity and simplicity of the gospel, that even upon the mere report of the settlement of

this church, there flocked together to the number of above six hundred, in hopes of hearing a sermon.

Whilst he staid here, expecting this so much desired establishment, he often preached in the neighbouring churches, and sometimes in the castle of Precigni, where he had been ordained. For as he was not permitted to make his ordinary residence at Langres, it made him the more diligent in visiting, instructing and comforting the Protestants in the country.

But when it was found impossible to obtain the necessary decree of the king's council, Mr Drelincourt felt so deep a sorrow on this account, that it threw him into a dangerous fit of sickness which lasted three months, and brought him almost to the grave.

Having recovered from this illness, he accepted of the call of the church of Paris, where he preached for the first time on the 15th of March 1620. But he always retained a particular affection for the members of his former church.

In the year 1625, he married the only daughter of a rich merchant in Paris, whose name was Boldue (a convert from the Romish church), by whom he had sixteen children, the seven first all sons, the rest intermixed, six sons and three daughters.

Nor was the blessing of God, which showed itself in his marriage by this uncommon fruitfulness, less visible in the success of his ministry. His sermons were very edifying; he was incomparably well skilled in comforting of the sick, and he managed with great success the affairs of the church, and even those of other flocks, upon which he never failed to be consulted when they were important. The services which he did to the church by his pen can never be sufficiently acknowledged, whether we consider his books of devotion, or those of controversy. In the former, there is such a vein of piety, and the spirit and expressions of scripture run through them in such a manner, that religious minds have always, and still do, wonderfully edify from them. What he wrote against the church of Rome has confirmed the Protestants more than can be expressed; for with the arms with which he furnished them, those who had not the advantage of learning were enabled to oppose the monks and parish priests, and resolutely contend with the missionaries. His writings have made him considered as the scourge of the Roman Catholic controvertists; and yet his candour and great endowments won him the love of many of that party. He had an easy access to the secretaries of state, the first

president, the king's advocate, and the civil and criminal lieutenants; but he never made any other use of his interest with them, than to assist the afflicted churches, or to serve such private persons as applied to him for his protection.

The chief lords of the reformed religion, in general, had the highest regard for him, particularly the Duke de la Force, the marshals Chatillon, Gascou, and Turenne, and the duchess of Tremouille, who distinguished him by a great many favours. They often sent for him to their palaces, and honoured him from time to time with their visits; as likewise did several foreign princes and noblemen, and the ambassadors of England and Holland; and all of them frequently made use of his prudent advice. We must not omit that he was particularly esteemed by the illustrious house of Hesse; as appears by the books which he dedicated to the princes and princesses of that name.

He was always animated with a warm zeal for the glory of God; to which, and the service of the church, he had consecrated all his labours; and was so indefatigable in the discharge of his function, that he never spared himself, when he had any ministerial duty to perform.

He was constant in visiting the sick; in comforting of whom, as we have before taken notice, he had a peculiar facility of happiness; and the little leisure he had from these holy offices, he faithfully employed for the benefit of the church, in defending and enforcing the great truths he taught by his writings, and in attacking the errors of the contrary party.

He departed this life on the 4th of November 1669, in the most comfortable disposition, as one who had been always faithful in his Lord's business. He preached to the last week of his life; his last sermon being that of the 27th of October 1669, taken from Psal. li. 7, 8, "Purge me with hyssop," &c.

We have already observed, that he was blessed with a great many children; and had also the consolation to see many of them grow up to an uncommon stature of piety and reputation.

The books which our excellent author left behind him, and which will always endear his memory to every good Christian, and true Protestant, are as follows:

1. A Treatise of Preparation for the Holy Supper.
2. A Catechism.
3. A Short View of the Controversies.
4. The Christian's Consolations against the Fears of Death.

These, of all his works, are those which have been the most frequently reprinted. Some of them have passed through above fifty editions, and have been translated into divers languages; particularly his admirable piece against the Fears of Death.

5. His Charitable Visits, in five volumes.

6. Three volumes of Sermons.

And thirteen works on different controversial subjects.

He likewise wrote several letters, which have been printed, one to the Duchess of Tremouille, upon her husband's revolt from the Protestant religion; one of consolation, addressed to Madame de la Tabariere; one upon the restoration of King Charles; and some upon the English Episcopacy, &c., by which it appears, that he had a particular esteem and veneration for the Church of England.

He also published several prayers; some of which were made for the King, others for the Queen and the Dauphin.

HIS BEHAVIOUR IN HIS LAST MOMENTS.

It having been reported in every quarter, that Monsieur Drelincourt died suddenly, of an apoplexy, several godly persons have thought it might be of service to promote the glory of God, and the edification of his church, to undeceive such as may have entertained this opinion, by acquainting all those into whose hands this may fall, that God was graciously pleased to permit his servant to glorify him to the last, and to make him an instrument of edifying all them who were witnesses of his happy death. It is this that occasions our present undertaking, to give a faithful and genuine account of his last minutes; which, though it comes abroad somewhat late, yet will not appear unseasonable, if that blessing and success attend it, which the authors hope and wish for.

But before we proceed to the particulars of the last scene of this illustrious life, it may not be improper to observe, that the deceased was naturally of a very strong and vigorous constitution, which enabled him to bear up under very great labours for a long time together; insomuch, that once, upon an extraordinary occasion, he had the strength to preach seven times in one day.

As God had bestowed upon him, together with his strength

of body, a very lively and active spirit, and a zeal which burned for his glory, he spared himself neither day nor night in the discharge of his function, but employed himself with an unwearied diligence and application, in visiting the sick, in looking after the affairs of the church, and in the divers works of piety and charity, of which his beneficent and compassionate temper never suffered him to want occasions; often causing him to repeat our Saviour's words, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts xx. 35.

He had, in particular, a very weighty charge upon him during the first years of his ministry in the church at Paris. For a few months after his call thither, Monsieur du Moulin being removed, he was twelve years one of the three persons to serve that great church; and even for a long time had no other assistant than Monsieur Mestrezat.

In the midst of so many employments, not being able to find any time in the day, he set aside part of the night for his meditations, and the composing his works.

But at length his youthful strength giving way to old age, his natural good constitution was extremely broke by these continual labours. The first notice he had of this change, was from the attack of a sharp defluxion, which fell from his head upon his throat, and occasioned him frequent disorders. In the last years of his life, his nature growing weaker every day, and not having that strength to resist the enemy which it had before, this defluxion began to fall upon his breast, and to afflict him, from time to time, with very painful obstructions, attended with a violent cough, which sometimes reduced him to the last extremity, and made it a doubtful struggle between life and death. This was particularly troublesome to him in the night, in winter, between that season and spring, and between autumn and that season.

Also, in the year that preceded the last of his life, there happened to him an accident, apparently mortal, and which, in its beginning, both the nature of the disorder, and circumstances attending it, were exactly like that which carried him out of the world. This was on the last day of April, in the year 1668, when, being already weak and indisposed, he would needs go that evening, contrary to the entreaties of his family, to the burying ground, to pay the last duties to one of his granddaughters whom God had taken to his rest. Accordingly he went, with some difficulty leaning on the arm of one of his sons; but as he returned, his legs failed him several times, so that he had much ado to set one foot before another: however, at last, with a great deal of trouble,

he made shift to get home, where he arrived exceeding faint, and in a cold sweat, appearing in a manner, without life; and so pale and wan, that for some time he frightened all his family; but at length he came to himself, being relieved by a remedy which he had sometimes used with success.

Notwithstanding these frequent and dangerous attacks, this faithful and zealous servant of God would not omit any of his ordinary labours and employments; insomuch that the next day after the accident of which we have been speaking, he went to preach at Charenton; and three days afterwards wrote in the morning eight hours together in his study; in which employ he took so much pleasure, that he often used to wish he might die with his pen in his hand. He was equally indefatigable in all the other duties of his function, so far as his strength would give him leave.

But, above all, he would never dispense with visiting the sick; which was a duty he had particularly at heart, and for which he was in an especial manner qualified, by the excellent and admirable gifts of prayer and consolation, wherewith God had enriched him; not to mention that happy discernment, which a long and daily experience had taught him, to suit his exhortations according to the necessity of the sick person, and the apparent issue of the disease. We may add, that in these visits he religiously practised what he himself sets forth, to be the duty of a faithful pastor, in the sixtieth of his Charitable Visits; which is to have a particular respect to the consolation of the poor, seeing they have the most immediate need of it. So we may justly apply to him, what Job said of himself, "That the loins of the poor and afflicted blessed him." Job xxxi. 20.

To the pressing remonstrances continually made him by his family, that he would favour himself upon account of his infirmities, and great age, he would commonly answer, "That he could willingly take such a resolution, but that he should never be able to put it in practice, because of his great desire to please all the world, and his known readiness to serve whoever applied to him." Even a few months before his death, the weather being very rough, he went at nine o'clock at night to visit one of his friends, who was dying, and did not return until midnight. This he called "a young man's exploit," but thought himself happy in being able to perform it.

In the midst of so many fatigues, he rightly judged, considering his age and infirmities, that there was no probability of his continuing long in the world; as he declared to his

flock some months before his death. To the same purpose he expressed himself to others, both by word of mouth and by writing, particularly after he had entered into his seventy-fourth year.

With this persuasion, he made a Christian preparation for death; or rather, as he himself expresses it, "being justly amazed at having passed such a number of years in the midst of so many fatigues and labours, I have fixed all my hopes upon a life which is neither reckoned by years nor ages." To this devout meditation upon death, or rather upon immortality, after which he earnestly aspired, was owing, that in the latter part of his life, he took up a custom, when he was alone, to pray to God every time he heard the clock strike, as if every hour warned him of his departure, and every stroke of the hammer summoned him to appear before God. This he discovers in one of his letters to his eldest son, in the confidence of paternal affection. To the same cause must also be attributed the extreme pleasure which he took in reading over his book of Consolations against the Fears of Death the year before he died; often declaring to those about him, "That he praised God for having inspired him with such a work, for the edification of his church, and his own comfort."

It is true, had it pleased God to prolong his days, the earnest desire he had to finish some works of piety, which heaven permitting, he had promised to the public, would have made him willingly cry out with the Psalmist, "Let my soul live, that it may praise thee!" Nevertheless, he submitted himself entirely to the adorable wisdom of God; as he himself tells us, in this excellent prayer, which you may find at the end of his Charitable Visits; "I have both lived and preached a long time. O Lord, I wait for thy salvation and deliverance. I am not weary of serving so good a master, so bountiful a Lord; nevertheless, my Lord, and my God, when it shall please thee to put an end to my labour, I shall go with fulness of joy into the rest of thy glory. Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God!"

He wrote this in the year 1668, and God delayed not long receiving him into his rest. The year following was the last of his life and labour; and this, in respect to him, was a year variously divided between sickness and health, life and death.

During this fatal year, he had two considerable calms, one in the spring, and the other in autumn. But these were soon followed by two terrible storms; in the last of which

the vessel of the man of God, that is to say, his body suffered shipwreck, while his blessed soul gained the port of salvation, the haven of glory.

In the month of March, he writes this account concerning the state of his health: "Though it is the time of the equinox, thank God, I am very well; better than I have been for a long while."

But this sudden gleam, the certain forerunner of a tempest, was but of short continuance; for on the 6th of April following, he makes this complaint in one of his letters: "I am often struggling between life and death. I was so well a little while ago, that I thought my health was going to be entirely re-established. But this last cold weather has affected it in such a manner, that, on the night between the 4th and 5th of this month, my cough was so violent, and my defluxion oppressed me so cruelly, that I was upon the point of being strangled no less than three times; wherefore I recommended myself unto God, not knowing whether it was his good pleasure to take me to his rest.

Nevertheless, as ill as he was, he would not dispense with himself from preaching on the 7th day of the same month, which put him to a great deal of pain, and increased his illness so much, that his physician plainly told him, that such another attempt would be enough to cause an inflammation on his lungs, and to bring on a continual fever. This blessed person himself was forced likewise to acknowledge, that in the excess of his zeal, "he had rather tempted God than relied upon his providence."

This accident deprived him of almost all his courage, and the hopes of ever mounting the pulpit again. Nevertheless, he comforted himself with the thought, that he should not be entirely useless to the church, so long as it should please God to continue him in the world. For besides visiting the sick, and looking after the affairs of the church, "If my tongue fail me," saith he, "I hope my pen will continue to labour for the glory of God, and the edification of his church."

But not long after, on the 21st of the month, being Easter Day, God having presented his servant with an extraordinary occasion of speaking a word of exhortation to such of his flock as could not that day get into the church at Charenton, he recommended himself to the Lord's mercy, and preached in the church porch with a good deal of facility. After which his health growing better, he began to take heart, and to entertain fresh hopes that he should soon be able to attend, as usual, the ordinary duties of his function.

On the 6th of May, he opened the synod at Charenton, where, after the conclusion of his sermon, he received the united thanks of all his brethren, which was a matter of great comfort to him; insomuch, that he praised God with his whole heart, "for having given him that new strength to glorify him in the presence of his servants."

This was the second calm which he experienced this year, and the last of his life. It lasted all summer, and during the first month of autumn. And this new and final health of this zealous servant of Jesus Christ, put him upon undertaking to preach twice in the church porch at Charenton on the fast day, being the 12th of September 1669; in which pious design, inspired no doubt by God, the blessing of God manifestly attended him, strengthening him in so wonderful a manner, that the last discourse seemed to come from him with more power and ease than the former.

This pleasing, but short and treacherous serenity, even increased till the eve, if I may so express myself, of that fatal storm which robbed us of this holy person. The light of his life, like that of a candle or torch, being just expiring, cast forth new flames, and appeared with greater brightness. To this purpose he writes to his eldest son on the 21st of September: "I have yet, thank God, some vigour left." On the 28th, "Thank God, I am in good health. I preached on Sunday morning; and I find no inconvenience from having preached twice on the fast day. I have a better appetite, and eat more than I have done at any time this twelve months." On the 5th of October, "I apply myself to my ordinary labours, and am, thank God, in good health." On the 19th, "Thank God, I have been very well all this week, and have rested on nights without coughing, spitting, or any of my old complaints. But God knows how long this will last. His will be done." And on the 26th, which was his last letter to his son, "I have great reason to praise God for the health which he is pleased to indulge me; for, thank God, I have been very well all this week, and have rested well on nights. I have also a good appetite." This whole letter is full of marks of the vigour both of his body and mind; and towards the latter end, he observes with joy, that "Thank God, he had just finished writing over his sermon for the morrow, and that he was going to read it at the candle."

Accordingly, on the morrow, being Sunday, the 27th of October, he preached in the morning, beginning, with this holy exercise, the week. Those who heard him, affirm that he showed a great deal of strength, both of body and mind, and

preached his last sermon (as has been mentioned) from Psalm li. 7, 8.

This last sermon was looked upon afterwards as a presage he had of his death, and a preparation for it, by desiring the pardon of his sins, and a cleansing from all the pollutions of his flesh and spirit, through the infinite mercy of God, and the blood of his Saviour. The whole audience were very well satisfied with his last performance, which they judged to be excellent, and worthy to crown all his former religious exercises. At his return to the city, he spent the rest of the Sabbath in acts of piety and charity ; and, at his return home, being desirous to enjoy the company of all his family then at Paris, he supped with them, and seemed very pleasant in his discourse : he continued well on Monday, and the next day, till the 29th of October, the fatal day in which his mortal distemper began to attack him ; from that morning he felt an indisposition, and had no appetite at dinner ; yet could not forbear visiting sick persons in his district. This good man came home very feeble, and out of order, with a fever upon him : some time after, his speech failed him ; and when Mr Malnoe (advocate in parliament, his son-in-law) was come to visit him, he was scarce able to speak ; he was persuaded to take his rest, he suddenly fell upon his knees and made such an excellent prayer, that his family never heard from him one more fervent : he discoursed of the frailty of human life, of the condition he was in, of the church of God, and insisted earnestly upon her deliverance; he prayed for all the members of his family, and in this last religious exercise performed amongst his domestics, he omitted nothing material, prayed with zeal and vigour, with a clear voice, and without hesitation, to their comfort, and his own satisfaction, being then only a little feverish. In this hopeful condition he went to bed, but about midnight he relapsed again into his former difficulty of speech ; the fever increasing upon him by degrees, a physician by his prescriptions gave him relief ; and he remembered the Psalms which he was wont to repeat, namely, xxxi., xxxii., xxxiv., xli., li., lxiii., and cxxx. He had always a great veneration for the Book of Psalms, which made him like the reading of John de Lere ; who writes how some savages of Brazil were wonderfully affected and ravished at the hearing of one of those divine hymns sung. A certain person that came to visit him, prayed that God would change his bed of sickness to a bed of health ; he answered, "My bed of health and rest will be in Paradise." A noble lady, then a close pri-

soner, for whom the sick person had a high esteem, having sent to inquire of his health, he told the messenger he was very sorry for her confinement, ordered him to present his service to the good lady, and to tell her, that he should see her no more but in heaven.

During this short interval, his mind was free to discourse about his domestic affairs; but in a little time after his cough and fever increasing violently upon him, his physician watched with him till morning. Our patient perceiving his dangerous condition, spake in this manner to him, "Sir, though all good Christians ought continually to be prepared to die, and though God hath granted me the grace to be ready when he shall please to call me, yet if you find I am drawing to my end, pray give me notice of it; for I am willing to put my affairs in order." About two or three hours after, the physician finding that he could not live much longer, it was judged convenient by his son-in-law to acquaint him with it; to whom he spake to this purpose: "I find the time of my deliverance is drawing near, and that God will take me to his rest. I shall be glad to discourse with you privately: I have not only looked upon you as my son-in-law, but as my child, whom I have loved and tenderly love; I recommend my family to your care, and desire you all to live in perfect union." And having given his lesson to all his children, as well absent as present, he ordered the private affairs of his family, and the rewards to be given to those who had been serviceable to him in his sickness; and ordered his son-in-law to entreat Mr Girard, the elder of his church, to carry this message to the Consistory of Charenton, "That he died their faithful servant, and prayed God with all his heart to preserve the church."

After this he spent most part of his time in prayers to God, repeating several texts of scripture, but with such a weak voice, they could only guess by some syllables what he said. He was often heard to repeat the words of Job, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," and those of the Psalms, "I have put my trust in thee, &c. I recomend my soul into thy hands." Thus he continued in his pious meditations. Then his son-in-law offered to read to him out of his Book of Consolations against the Fears of Death, which he attended to, and seemed to be well pleased with the Consolation for a dying Minister, and with the prayer appointed for such a one who faced death with a holy joy. "That is, said he, very good; I don't speak it because it came from me: God be praised that he enabled me to publish this Book, to comfort

others as well as myself." The next morning, when Mr Girard came to visit him, he repeated to him the same words that he had given to his son-in-law in charge to tell him; and he delivered to him a bill, to be prayed for publicly in the congregation. At that time Mr Daille, Mr Morus, and Mr Claude came to see him, expressing their tender affection and concernment for him; at which he seemed to be moved. Mr Daille made a pathetic exhortation, which the patient kindly accepted; and speaking of the loss the church would sustain by his death, Mr Drelincourt answered, "Sir, you are far more useful to her than I can be; my desire is to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better for me." At which words Mr Daille asked him, Don't you add with the apostle, that it is more necessary for the church that you should continue in the flesh? He replied, "God will raise ministers who shall discharge their duty better than I can." When Mr Daille asked him whether his hope was not in the mercy of God, he answered him in divers texts of Scripture such as these, "I know in whom I have believed; I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, &c. I draw towards the mark of the prize of the high calling," &c.

Mr Daille, perceiving how painful his speech was to him, advised him to speak to himself, to hinder the increase of his distemper, but he answered, "how willing he was to glorify God to the last gasp, and edify by his speech, such as were there present." Then having embraced each other at their parting, Mr Daille told him, he did not altogether despair of his recovery, and that he hoped God would save him, according to the prayers of the church: he replied, "The will of the Lord be done, I resign myself entirely to the order of his providence." The two other ministers were not wanting in their prayers and exhortations. About noon these gentlemen left him to rest, which he desired them to take; but instead of sleeping, he was heard to pray very earnestly three or four times, and concluded every prayer with Our Father, and I believe in God, &c. He gave his blessing to all his children, and to them that desired it of him. In the afternoon Mr Claude returned to him again, and continued until six; our patient answered distinctly, but briefly, by reason of his great weakness. About 11 o'clock at night, several physicians came to him, and at the sight of him they agreed, that there was scarce any hopes of him; meantime he was praying and addressing himself to God, but could not be well understood. Yet when a

lady, one of his intimate friends, came to his bed-side, he said, "Madam, you are an eye-witness of my groans and sufferings; but I cannot well speak to you." And about 10 at night he called to mind that a pledge of some value had been committed to his keeping: he ordered it to be taken out of his closet, brought to him, examined if it were all there, and gave orders to restore it to the right owner.

His second son, minister of the Reformed Church of Fontainebleau, came into the room to see his dear father departing, who knew him, and seemed to be moved at the first sight of him: Mr Claude then asked him if he knew his son: he answered, Yes; this was the last word he was heard distinctly to speak. His son assisted his dying father with his exhortation and prayers: he was sensible to the last, his countenance never changed until about an hour before he deceased; and though nature was struggling with the disease, and he tormented with a burning fever, he seemed by his looks to be transported with joy, and full of comfort. On Sunday, the 4th of November 1669, this reverend divine yielded up his soul to God.

This was the end of this holy and zealous servant of God, who departed this life in the 74th year of his age, the 52d year of his ministry, and in the 50th year after his being called to serve the Reformed Church of Paris. He died in the bed of honour, in the exercise of the duties of his function, preaching the gospel, writing in vindication of the truth, and comforting the sick, &c.

The eloquent tongue of Mr Daille, and Mr Morus, from the pulpit of Charenton, the tears of the whole congregation that day and the next, when they committed his body to the grave, in expectation of a joyful resurrection (in a word, the commendation of people of both religions) sufficiently verified the saying of Solomon, "The memory of the just is blessed." The portraiture of his excellent, learned and religious mind, may be seen in his works, particularly in this useful and comfortable treatise, *The Consolations against the Fears of Death.*

We doubt not but he is gone to receive in heaven the incorruptible crown of glory, which the great God and Redeemer of our souls promiseth of his mercy to all faithful servants. God grant that we may imitate his excellent life, and follow him in his happy end!

A TRUE

RELATION

OF THE

APPARITION

OF

MRS VEAL,

THE NEXT DAY AFTER HER DEATH,

TO

MRS BARGRAVE,

AT

CANTERBURY, THE EIGHTH OF SEPTEMBER, 1705.

Which Apparition earnestly recommends the Perusal of Drelincourt's Book of Christian Consolations against the Fears of Death.

PREFACE.

THIS relation is matter of fact, and attended with such circumstances, as may induce any reasonable men to believe it. It was sent by a gentleman, a justice of peace, at Maidstone in Kent, and a very intelligent person, to his friend in London, as it is here worded (which discourse is attested by a very sober and understanding gentlewoman, a kinswoman of the said gentleman's, who lives in Canterbury, within a few doors of the house in which the within-named Mrs Bargrave lived); who believes his kinswoman to be of so discerning a spirit, as not to be put upon by any fallacy; and who positively assured him, that the whole matter, as it is related and laid down, is really true; and what she herself had in the same words (as near as may be) from Mrs Bargrave's own mouth, who, she knows, had no reason to invent and publish such a story, or any design to forge and tell a lie, being a woman of much honesty and virtue, and her whole life a course, as it were, of piety. The use which we ought to make of it, is to consider, that there is a life to come after this, and a just God, who will retribute to every one according to the deeds done in the body: and therefore to reflect upon our past course of life we have led in the world; that our time is short and uncertain; and that if we would escape the punishment of the ungodly, and receive the reward of the righteous, which is the laying hold of eternal life, we ought, for the time to come, to return to God by a speedy repentance, ceasing to do evil, and learning to do well: To seek after God early, if haply he may be found of us, and lead such lives for the future, as may be well pleasing in his sight.

A

TRUE RELATION

OF THE

APPARITION OF MRS VEAL.

This thing is so rare in all its circumstances, and on so good authority, that my reading and conversation have not given me any thing like it: it is fit to gratify the most ingenious and serious enquirer. Mrs Bargrave is the person to whom Mrs Veal appeared after her death: she is my intimate friend, and I can avouch for her reputation, for these last fifteen or sixteen years, on my own knowledge; and I can confirm the good character she had from her youth, to the time of my acquaintance; though since this relation, she is calumniated by some people, that are friends to the brother of Mrs Veal, who appeared; who think the relation of this appearance to be a reflection, and endeavour what they can to blast Mrs Bargrave's reputation, and to laugh the story out of countenance. But by the circumstances thereof, and the cheerful disposition of Mrs Bargrave, notwithstanding the ill usage of a very wicked husband, there is not yet the least sign of dejection in her face; nor did I ever hear her let fall a desponding or murmuring expression; nay, not when actually under her husband's barbarity; which I have been witness to, and several other persons of undoubted reputation.

Now you must know, Mrs Veal was a maiden gentlewoman of about thirty years of age, and for some years last past had been troubled with fits, which were perceived coming on her, by her going off from her discourse very abruptly, to some impertinence. She was maintained by an only brother, and kept his house in Dover. She was a very pious woman, and her brother a very sober man, to all

appearance; but now he does all he can to null or quash the story. Mrs Veal was intimately acquainted with Mrs Bargrave from her childhood. Mrs Veal's circumstances were then mean; her father did not take care of his children as he ought, so that they were exposed to hardships: and Mrs Bargrave in those days had as unkind a father, though she wanted neither for food nor clothing, whilst Mrs Veal wanted for both, insomuch that she would often say, "Mrs Bargrave, you are not only the best, but the only friend I have in the world; and no circumstance in life shall ever dissolve my friendship." They would often condole with each other on their adverse fortunes, and read together Drelincourt upon Death, and other good books: and so, like two Christian friends, they comforted each other under their sorrow.

Some time after, Mr Veal's friends got him a place in the custom-house at Dover, which occasioned Mrs Veal, by little and little, to fall off from her intimacy with Mrs Bargrave, though there was never any such thing as a quarrel, but an indifference came on by degrees, till at last Mrs Bargrave had not seen her in two years and a half; though above a twelvemonth of the time, Mrs Bargrave hath been absent from Dover, and this last half-year has been in Canterbury about two months of the time, dwelling in a house of her own.

In this house, on the eighth of September, one thousand seven hundred and five, she was sitting alone in the forenoon, thinking over her unfortunate life, and arguing herself into a due resignation to Providence, though her condition seemed hard. "And," said she, "I have been provided for hitherto, and doubt not but I shall be still; and am well satisfied, that my afflictions shall end, when it is most fit for me:" and then took up her sewing-work, which she had no sooner done, but she hears a knocking at the door. She went to see who was there, and this proved to be Mrs Veal, her old friend, who was in a riding-habit: at that moment of time the clock struck twelve at noon.

"Madam," says Mrs Bargrave, "I am surprised to see you, you have been so long a stranger;" but told her, she was glad to see her, and offered to salute her; which Mrs Veal complied with, till their lips almost touched; and then Mrs Veal drew her hand across her own eyes, and said, "I am not very well;" and so waved it. She told Mrs Bargrave, she was going a journey, and had a great mind to see her first. "But," says Mrs Bargrave, "how came you to take a journey alone? I am amazed at it, because I know you have a fond brother." "Oh!" says Mrs Veal, "I gave my brother the slip, and came away, because I had so great a desire to see you before I took my journey." So Mrs Bargrave went in with her into another room within the

first; and Mrs Veal sat her down in an elbow-chair, in which Mrs Bargrave was sitting, when she heard Mrs Veal knock. Then says Mrs Veal, "My dear friend, I am come to renew our old friendship again, and beg your pardon for my breach of it; and if you can forgive me, you are the best of women." "O," says Mrs Bargrave, "do not mention such a thing; I have not had an uneasy thought about it; I can easily forgive it." "What did you think of me?" said Mrs Veal. Says Mrs Bargrave, "I thought you were like the rest of the world, and that prosperity had made you forget yourself and me." Then Mrs Veal reminded Mrs Bargrave of the many friendly offices she did her in former days, and much of the conversation they had with each other in the times of their adversity; what books they read, and what comfort, in particular, they received from Drelincourt's Book of Death, which was the best, she said, on that subject ever written. She also mentioned Dr Sherlock, the two Dutch books which were translated, written upon death, and several others: but Drelincourt, she said, had the clearest notions of death and of the future state, of any who handled that subject. Then she asked Mrs Bargrave, whether she had Drelincourt? She said, "Yes." Says Mrs Veal, "Fetch it." And so Mrs Bargrave goes up stairs, and brings it down. Says Mrs Veal, "Dear Mrs Bargrave, if the eyes of our faith were as open as the eyes of our body, we should see numbers of angels about us for our guard. The notions we have of heaven now, are nothing like what it is, as Drelincourt says. Therefore be comforted under your afflictions; and believe that the Almighty has a particular regard to you, and that your afflictions are marks of God's favour; and when they have done the business they are sent for, they shall be removed from you. And, believe me, my dear friend, believe what I say to you, one minute of future happiness will infinitely reward you for all your sufferings: for, I can never believe," and claps her hand upon her knee with great earnestness, which indeed ran through most of her discourse, "that ever God will suffer you to spend all your days in this afflicted state: but be assured, that your afflictions shall leave you, or you them, in a short time." She spake in that pathetical and heavenly manner, that Mrs Bargrave wept several times, she was so deeply affected with it.

Then Mrs Veal mentioned Dr Horneck's Ascetic, at the end of which he gives an account of the lives of the primitive Christians. Their pattern she recommended to our imitation, and said, "Their conversation was not like this of our age: for now," says she, "there is nothing but frothy, vain discourse, which is far different from theirs. Theirs was to edification, and to build one another up in faith; so that they were not as we are, nor are we as they were:

but," said she, "we ought to do as they did. There was an hearty friendship among them; but where is it now to be found?" Says Mrs Bargrave, "It is hard indeed to find a true friend in these days." Says Mrs Veal, "Mr Norris has a fine copy of verses, called Friendship in Perfection, which I wonderfully admire. Have you seen the book?" says Mrs Veal. "No," says Mrs Bargrave; "but I have the verses of my own writing out." "Have you?" says Mrs Veal; "then fetch them." Which she did from above stairs, and offered them to Mrs Veal to read, who refused, and waved the thing, saying, holding down her head would make it ache; and then desired Mrs Bargrave to read them to her, which she did. As they were admiring friendship, Mrs Veal said, "Dear Mrs Bargrave, I shall love you for ever. In these verses there is twice used the word Elysian. Ah!" says Mrs Veal, "these poets have such names for heaven!" She would often draw her hand, across her eyes, and say, "Mrs Bargrave, do you not think I am mightily impaired by my fits?" "No," says Mrs Bargrave, "I think you look as well as ever I knew you."

After all this discourse, which the apparition put in much finer words than Mrs Bargrave said she could pretend to, and as much more than she can remember (for it cannot be thought, that an hour and three quarters' conversation could be retained, though the main of it, she thinks, she does), she said to Mrs Bargrave, she would have her write a letter to her brother, and tell him, she would have him give rings to such and such; and that there was a purse of gold in her cabinet, and that she would have two broad pieces given to her cousin Watson.

Talking at this rate, Mrs Bargrave thought that a fit was coming upon her, and so placed herself in a chair just before her knees, to keep her from falling to the ground, if her fits should occasion it (for the elbow-chair, she thought, would keep her from falling on either side); and to divert Mrs Veal, as she thought, took hold of her gown-sleeve several times, and commended it. Mrs Veal told her, it was a scoured silk, and newly made up. But for all this, Mrs Veal persisted in her request, and told Mrs Bargrave, she must not deny her: and she would have her tell her brother all their conversation, when she had opportunity. "Dear Mrs Veal," says Mrs Bargrave, "this seems so impertinent, that I cannot tell how to comply with it; and what a mortifying story will our conversation be to a young gentleman? Why," says Mrs Bargrave, "it is much better, methinks, to do it yourself." "No," says Mrs Veal, "though it seems impertinent to you now, you will see more reason for it hereafter." Mrs Bargrave then, to satisfy her importunity, was going to fetch a pen and ink; but Mrs Veal said, "Let it alone now, but do it when

I am gone; but you must be sure to do it:" which was one of the last things she enjoined her at parting; and so she promised her.

Then Mrs Veal asked for Mrs Bargrave's daughter; she said, she was not at home. "But if you have a mind to see her," says Mrs Bargrave, "I'll send for her." "Do," says Mrs Veal. On which she left her, and went to a neighbour's to see for her; and by the time Mrs Bargrave was returning, Mrs Veal was got without the door into the street, in the face of the beast-market, on a Saturday (which is market-day) and stood ready to part, as soon as Mrs Bargrave came to her. She asked her, why she was in such haste. She said, she must be going, though perhaps she might not go her journey till Monday; and told Mrs Bargrave, she hoped she should see her again at her cousin Watson's before she went whither she was going. Then she said, she would take leave of her, and walked from Mrs Bargrave in her view, till a turning interrupted the sight of her, which was three quarters after one in the afternoon.

Mrs Veal died the 7th of September, at twelve o'clock at noon, of her fits, and had not above four hours' senses before death, in which time she received the sacrament. The next day after Mrs Veal's appearing, being Sunday, Mrs Bargrave was mightily indisposed with a cold, and a sore throat, that she could not go out that day; but on Monday morning she sent a person to Captain Watson's, to know if Mrs Veal was there. They wondered at Mrs Bargrave's enquiry; and sent her word, that she was not there, nor was expected. At this answer Mrs Bargrave told the maid she had certainly mistaken the name, or made some blunder. And though she was ill, she put on her hood, and went herself to Captain Watson's, though she knew none of the family, to see if Mrs Veal was there or not. They said, they wondered at her asking, for that she had not been in town; they were sure, if she had, she would have been there. Says Mrs Bargrave, "I am sure she was with me on Saturday almost two hours." They said, it was impossible; for they must have seen her, if she had. In comes Captain Watson, while they were in dispute, and said that Mrs Veal was certainly dead, and her escutcheons were making. This strangely surprized Mrs Bargrave; when she sent to the person immediately who had the care of them, and found it true. Then she related the whole story to Captain Watson's family, and what gown she had on, and how striped; and that Mrs Veal told her it was scoured. Then Mrs Watson cried out, "You have seen her indeed, for none knew, but Mrs Veal and myself, that the gown was scoured." And Mrs Watson owned, that she described the gown exactly: "For," said she, "I helped her to make it up." This Mrs Watson blazed all about town, and avouched the demonstration of the truth of Mrs Bargrave's seeing Mrs Veal's apparition. And Cap-

tain Watson carried two gentlemen immediately to Mrs Bargrave's house, to hear the relation from her own mouth. And when it spread so fast, that gentlemen and persons of quality, the judicious and sceptical part of the world, flocked in upon her, it at last became such a task, that she was forced to go out of the way; for they were, in general, extremely satisfied of the truth of the thing, and plainly saw, that Mrs Bargrave was no hypochondriac; for she always appears with such a cheerful air and pleasing mien, that she has gained the favour and esteem of all the gentry: and it is thought a great favour, if they can but get the relation from her own mouth. I should have told you before, that Mrs Veal told Mrs Bargrave, that her sister and brother-in-law were just come down from London to see her. Says Mrs Bargrave, "How came you to order matters so strangely!" "It could not be helped," said Mrs Veal. And her brother and sister did come to see her, and entered the town of Dover, just as Mrs Veal was expiring. Mrs Bargrave asked her, whether she would drink some tea. Says Mrs Veal, "I do not care if I do; but I'll warrant you, this mad fellow," meaning Mrs Bargrave's husband, "has broken all your trinkets." "But," says Mrs Bargrave, "I'll get something to drink in for all that;" but Mrs Veal waved it, and said, "It is no matter, let it alone;" and so it passed.

All the time I sat with Mrs Bargrave, which was some hours, she recollected fresh sayings of Mrs Veal. And one material thing more she told Mrs Bargrave, that old Mr Breton allowed Mrs Veal ten pounds a year; which was a secret, and unknown to Mrs Bargrave till Mrs Veal told it her.

Mrs Bargrave never varies in her story; which puzzles those who doubt of the truth, or are unwilling to believe it. A servant in the neighbour's yard, adjoining to Mrs Bargrave's house, heard her talking to somebody an hour of the time Mrs Veal was with her. Mrs Bargrave went out to her next neighbour's the moment she parted with Mrs Veal, and told her what ravishing conversation she had just had with an old friend, and told the whole of it. "Drelincourt's Book of Christian Consolations against the Fears of Death" is, since this happened, bought up strangely. And it is to be observed, that notwithstanding all the trouble and fatigue Mrs Bargrave has undergone upon this account, she never took the value of a farthing, nor suffered her daughter to take any thing of any body, and therefore can have no interest in telling the story.

But Mr Veal does what he can to stifle the matter, and said, he would see Mrs Bargrave; but yet it is certain matter of fact, that he has been at Captain Watson's since the death of his sister, and yet never went near Mrs Bargrave; and some of his friends report her to be a liar, and that she knew of Mr Breton's ten pounds a year. But

the person who pretends to say so has the reputation of a notorious liar, among persons whom I know to be of undoubted credit. Now Mr Veal is more of a gentleman than to say she lies; but says, a bad husband has crazed her. But she needs only present herself, and it will effectually confute that pretence. Mr Veal says, he asked his sister on her death-bed, whether she had a mind to dispose of any thing; and she said, "No." Now, the things which Mrs Veal's apparition would have disposed of, were so trifling, and nothing of justice aimed at in their disposal, that the design of it appears to me to be only in order to make Mrs Bargrave so to demonstrate the truth of her appearance, as to satisfy the world of the reality thereof as to what she had seen and heard, and to secure her reputation among the reasonable and understanding part of mankind. And then again, Mr Veal owns that there was a purse of gold; but it was not found in her cabinet, but in a comb-box. This looks improbable; for that Mrs Watson owned, that Mrs Veal was so very careful of the key of the cabinet, that she would trust nobody with it. And if so, no doubt she would not trust her gold out of it. And Mrs Veal's often drawing her hand over her eyes, and asking Mrs Bargrave whether her fits had not impaired her, looks to me, as if she did it on purpose to remind Mrs Bargrave of her fits, to prepare her not to think it strange, that she should put her upon writing to her brother, to dispose of rings and gold, which looks so much like a dying person's request; and it took accordingly with Mrs Bargrave, as the effects of her fits coming upon her; and was one of the many instances of Mrs Veal's wonderful love to her, and care of her, that she should not be affrighted; which indeed appears in her whole management, particularly in coming to her in the day-time, waving the salutation, and when she was alone; and then the manner of her parting, to prevent a second attempt to salute her.

Now, why Mr Veal should think this relation a reflection (as it is plain he does, by his endeavouring to stifle it), I cannot imagine; because the generality believe her to be a good spirit, her discourse was so heavenly. Her two great errands were to comfort Mrs Bargrave in her affliction, and to ask her forgiveness for the breach of friendship, and with a pious discourse to encourage her. So that after all, to suppose that Mrs Bargrave could hatch such an invention as this from Friday noon till Saturday noon (supposing that she knew of Mrs Veal's death the very first moment) without jumbling circumstances, and without any interest too; she must be more witty, fortunate, and wicked too, than any indifferent person, I dare say, will allow. I asked Mrs Bargrave several times, if she was sure she felt the gown: she answered modestly, "If my senses are to be relied on, I am sure of it." I asked her, if she heard a sound

when she clapped her hand upon her knee. She said she did not remember she did; but said she appeared to be as much a substance as I did, who talked with her. "And I may," said she, "be as soon persuaded, that your apparition is talking to me now, as that I did not really see her: for I was under no manner of fear, and received her as a friend, and parted with her as such. I would not," says she, "give one farthing to make any one believe it: I have no interest in it; nothing but trouble is entailed upon me for a long time, for aught I know; and had it not come to light by accident, it would never have been made public." But now, she says, she will make her own private use of it, and keep herself out of the way as much as she can; and so she has done since. She says, she had a gentleman who came thirty miles to her to hear the relation; and that she had told it to a room full of people at a time. Several particular gentlemen have had the story from Mrs Bargrave's own mouth.

This thing has very much affected me, and I am as well satisfied as I am of the best-grounded matter of fact. And why we should dispute matter of fact, because we cannot solve things of which we can have no certain or demonstrative notions, seems strange to me. Mrs Bargrave's authority and sincerity alone would have been undoubted in any other case.

THE

CHRISTIAN'S CONSOLATIONS

AGAINST

THE FEARS OF DEATH.

CHAPTER I.

That there is nothing more dreadful and terrible than Death, to such as have no hope in GOD.

A HOLY man, in speaking of Death, styles it, with a great deal of elegance and propriety, THE KING OF TERRORS, Job xviii. 14; that is to say, the most terrible thing in the world. Nor indeed is there any thing that presents itself to our imagination, which bears a more formidable aspect. It is possible to escape the edge of the sword, to stop the mouths of lions, and to quench the rage of fire; but when Death once shoots at us the envenomed arrows, of which his quiver is full, when it opens its infernal throat, and vomits forth its devouring flames, it is utterly impossible for us to guard against its fury.

There are a number of warlike inventions wherewith to oppose the attempts of the most powerful and implacable enemy; but neither the stratagems of the greatest captains, the most regular fortifications, nor the most victorious and triumphant armies, can withstand a single moment the approaches of death. It pierces, in an instant, through the

strongest bulwarks, the thickest walls, and the most solid towers. It leaps over the widest ditches, the highest forts, and the most inaccessible rocks. It blows down the strongest barricadoes, and laughs at all our military intrenchments; every where it finds the weakness of our armour, and, through the best tempered breast-plate, strikes the proudest heart. In the most solitary retirement it comes upon us, and snatches us from the midst of the most faithful and vigilant guards. In short, there is nothing either in nature or art, which can protect us from its cruel and insatiable hands.

There are none so barbarous but are sometimes overcome by the prayers and tears of such as prostrate themselves to implore mercy and compassion; and even those who have the least sense of humanity commonly spare the weakest sex and age. But unmerciful Death has no more respect to such as humble themselves, than to those who resist. It regards not the tears of infants sucking at the breast, but plucks them from the bosoms of their tender mothers, and dashes them in pieces before their eyes. It mocks at the lamentations of the fair and lovely, and delights to trample upon their enchanting beauties. It stops its ears to the supplications of trembling old age, and takes a pride in casting to the ground those venerable oaks which have been so long rooted in the world.

In the day of battle, when princes or generals of an army are taken prisoners, they are treated in a different manner from common soldiers; but inexorable Death, who is blind to all distinctions, treads under foot, with the same haughtiness, the prince and the subject, the master and the servant, the nobleman and the vassal, the rich Dives and the beggar Lazarus. It blows out with the same blast, the most shining luminaries, and the most obscure lamps. It has no more respect for the crowns of kings, the pope's triple crown, and the cardinal's hat, than for the shepherd's crook, or the slave's chains. Sooner or later it heaps them all together in the same dark and loathsome prison, and in the same mortar reduces them to dust.

There is no war so furious and cruel, but what admits of some days, or at least some hours of truce, and even the most inhuman minds are at last weary of their conquests, and cloyed with shedding blood. But insatiable Death never cries, *It is enough.* At every hour and moment it mows down whole nations and kindreds. The flesh of all the animals that have lived and died during the space of more than six thousand years, hath not been able to glut the ravenous hunger of this devouring monster.

The fortune of war is various ; he that wins the victory to-day, to-morrow may be put to flight ; and he that rides at present on a triumphal car, may become the footstool of his enemy. But Death is always victorious, and insolently triumphs over all the kings and people of the earth. It never returns to its den without being loaded with spoils and drenched with blood. The strong Sampsons and the victorious Davids who have torn in pieces lions and bears, and cut off the heads of Goliahs, have at last been devoured and swallowed up by Death. The great Alexanders, and the triumphant Cæsars, who made the world to tremble before them, and subdued most part of the habitable earth, could never find any weapons to defend them against this last enemy. When magnificent statues, and stately trophies, were erected to their honour, Death laughed them to scorn, and mocked at their foolish vanity; the rich marbles whereon so many proud titles were engraved, covering nothing but a little rotten flesh, and a few bones which Death hath broken and reduced to ashes.

We read in the revelation of the prophet Daniel, that king Nebuchadnezzar saw in a dream, a great image, whose brightness was excellent, and the form thereof terrible ; "Its head was of fine gold, its breast and arms were of silver, its belly and thighs of brass, its legs of iron, and its feet partly of iron and partly of clay," Dan. ii. 32, 33. As this mighty prince was beholding it with astonishment, a little stone, cut out of a mountain without hands, smote the feet of this prodigious statue, which were of iron and clay, and broke them to pieces ; not only the iron and clay were broken but also the gold, the silver and the brass ; and it all became as chaff which the wind driveth away, Psal. i. 4. This mystical image represents the four universal monarchies of the world, that of Babylon, that of the Medes and the Persians, that of the Greeks and that of the Romans. It likewise represents to us the vanity and inconstancy of all things under the sun. For what is all the pomp, glory, power and dignity of this life, but a smoke driven with the wind, and a vapour that soon vanishes ? It is like a shadow that flies from us, or like a dream that quickly fades away. When man, who was created in the image of God, makes his appearance from the dust, he struts about a little while, and becomes formidable ; but as soon as Death strikes at his earthly parts, and begins to break his flesh and his bones, all the pomp and power, all the glory and magnificence of the richest, most victorious and most terrible monarch, is

changed into a loathsome stench, turns to ashes, and is reduced to nothing. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!" Eccles. i. 2.

Since, therefore, Death is so cruel as to spare none, and its power so great that none can either escape or resist, it is no wonder that it becomes so terrible, and fills with fear, anguish and despair, the minds of all such as have not settled their faith and hope upon God. There is no criminal so hardened but trembles, and is seized with horror, when he sees the scaffold erecting, upon which he is condemned to be broken upon the wheel, or when he sees in the fire the red-hot irons with which he is to be pinched to death.

In the midst of a sumptuous banquet, king Belshazzar saw the fingers of a man's hand writing these words upon the walls of his palace, "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN;" which is thus interpreted by the prophet Daniel, "MENE, God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it; TEKEL, thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting; PERES or UPHARSIN, thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians," Dan. v. The moment this great monarch cast his eyes upon this miraculous writing, "his countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another." How much greater cause, then, has the profane and worldly man to be seized with horror and dismay, who, in the midst of his vain pomp and deceitful pleasures, may perceive the frightful hand of death writing on every wall in his house, in capital letters, and even engraving on his forehead, that "God hath numbered his days," and that this in which he breathes shall be soon followed by an eternal night! That God hath weighed him in the balance of justice, and found him light as the wind; and that the Almighty Disposer of all things, to whom vengeance belongs, will soon disrobe him of all his glory and riches, to clothe therewith his enemies! It is certain no comfort can be found for those wretched sinners, who not only understand this to be their dreadful sentence, but also hear the thundering voice of the Sovereign Judge of the world, exasperated by their iniquities. They see hell open its mouth to receive them, and the fiery chains already prepared which shall confine them to all eternity! They even now feel the hands of their tormentors, who drag them to punishment, and see themselves stretched and tortured in that horrible place, where there is nothing but "weeping and gnashing of teeth," Matt. xxii.

13. Even here they feel the fierce approaches of that lake of fire and brimstone, which is "the second death," Rev. xx. 14. And it may be justly said of these unhappy wretches, that hell comes to them before they go to hell; and that in this life they have a foretaste of the grievous torments that await them in the next. Hence it comes to pass, that some of them offer violence to themselves and perpetrate an unnatural murder upon their own persons, as if they were afraid they should not be cut off by a hand wicked enough. The expectation of death is more intolerable to them than death itself; and they had rather cast themselves headlong into the bottomless pit of hell, than endure the terrors and fears of it in their guilty consciences; to be delivered from the flashes of hell fire, that mount up to their souls in this life, they plunge themselves, with a brutal fury, into everlasting burnings.

What is still more terrible, these horrors, agonies, and fears, that seize upon the wicked, are not for a moment. As a criminal, who knows there is a sentence of death pronounced against him, has continually before his eyes the torments preparing for him: if he hears his prison door unlock, or a fly buzzing about his ears, he presently concludes they are coming to drag him to execution; in some sense, he desires what he dreads, and hastens the approaches of that which he wishes to avoid, but cannot. So desperate sinners whom God has abandoned, who know there is a sentence of eternal death pronounced against them in the court of King of Kings, and that from this sentence there is no appeal, must needs be in perpetual fear. They have constantly before their eyes the hideous form of death, which fills them with trouble, and wakes in their breasts a thousand furies. To use St Paul's expression, "Through fear of death they are all their life time subject to bondage," Heb. ii. 15; that is to say, they are like so many miserable slaves, that continually tremble under the cruel hands of a merciless tyrant.

I know there are some Atheists who talk of death with a great deal of contempt, and make an open profession of not being afraid of it, nevertheless they bear in their bosoms some secret thorns, which often galls them, some terrors and apprehensions, which racks and disquiets them, in spite of all their bravadoes. It is true, for the most part, they boast loudly of not being afraid of death, and make a mock at it, when they believe it at a distance from them; but then, upon its approach, these very wretches are the first that turn pale, and show their cowardice and despair.

If there be any that laugh at death, it is only in appearance, or it is, as it were, a laughter upon the lips. They are like a new-born infant, which while it seems to smile, is inwardly tormented in the bowels; or like those that eat of the famous herb, mentioned by the naturalists, which causes a pleasant smile to wanton upon the lips, while it conveys a mortal poison to the heart.

In short, if there be any who die unconcerned, or without any terror upon their conscience, they must be either persons entirely stupid and brutal, like a drunkard who is thrown from a precipice when fast asleep; or they must be such buffoon souls as resemble those merry criminals that go dancing to the gallows; or else they must be such as are transported with rage and despair, who may properly enough be compared to a wild boar, that, rushing forward with a blind fury, throws himself into the huntsman's toil. Such monsters deserve not to be reckoned in the number of rational creatures.

CHAPTER II.

That in all the philosophy of the Heathens there is no true and solid comfort against the fears of death.

THERE are certain pretenders to physic, who appear at first sight very knowing, and talk of diseases with a good deal of acuteness and subtlety, but, nevertheless, are shamefully ignorant at the bottom, and very unfortunate in their practice. Their unseasonable learning disturbs the patient more than their remedies ease him, and they themselves are a new disease and an additional affliction. In this they very aptly represent to us the philosophers among the Heathens; for when they go about to describe to us the misery of our human condition they sharpen the fine edge of their wits, and display their utmost skill and rhetoric. Some of them laugh at our calamities in a very ingenious manner; and others, with equal artifice, weep to behold them. But in all their writings, all their tragic expressions, we find not any solid and sincere comforts against the apprehensions of death; insomuch that the weakness and vanity of their conceits obliges us to tell them, as Job did his troublesome friends,

"Your remembrances are like unto ashes; your bodies to bodies of clay," Job xiii. 12.

Some of them indeed have very well said, that we begin to die as soon as we begin to breathe; and that our life is like a candle, that lives by its own consumption, its flame being that which devours it: for the natural heat that maintains our sensitive life, by little and little undermines it, spending and consuming our radical moisture, which is the same to us as oil to a lamp, or wax to a taper.

Others, with no less elegance, assert, that our life is but a *swift race from one mother to another;* that is to say, from the womb of our mothers, that brought us into the world, to the womb and bosom of the earth, that will at last receive us: for no sooner are we born, than we run a swift race towards our graves; at the very time we are flying from death, we insensibly approach towards it, and contrary to our intentions, throw ourselves into its embraces.

Some of the same school have compared man to a bubble of water, which rises up and swells, and at the same instant breaks and disappears; or to the water-bottles of divers colours, which little children blow up and destroy with their breath. In truth, the beauty of man is nothing but a vain appearance, which passes away, and vanishes in a moment: "All flesh is as grass," and the glory of man as the "flower of the field," Is. xl. 6. 1 Pet. i. 24.

One of these great philosophers being asked, what the life of man was? answered not a word; either because he thought the question deserved no answer, or rather because he had a mind to imitate the custom of the age he lived in, which, for the most part, conveyed its instructions by gestures and symbolical representations: he therefore entered into a chamber, and directly passed out again, giving his disciples thereby to understand that the life of man is no more than a coming into the world, and a going out of it; the first of which actions is followed very close by the other.

Another of the same sect, after having taken several turns about the room, with a very stately air, immediately slipt away, and hid himself in a hole; intimating thereby that life is a kind of masquerade, a vain show, which is over in a moment. After a man has placed all his plumes to the best advantage, strutted about a little while, and drawn upon himself the eyes and admiration of the world; on a sudden, death comes upon him, tarnishes all his lustre, erases his pompous titles, and at once swallows up all his glory and magnificence.

We are in this world like so many players upon a stage, one represents a king, another an emperor; this is a privy counsellor, and that a minister of state, but when the play is over, and they have laid aside their habits, you no longer know which is which. We are as so many counters on a table, some stand for units, others for tens, some for hundreds, some for thousands, and some for millions; but as soon as they are swept into the purse, and inclosed there, the vast difference vanishes. This is a lively image of the condition of men in this world; for in this life some are placed on thrones, whilst others are seated on dung-hills; one sweats beneath a load of gold and silk, while another has scarce rags enough to hide his nakedness; these command as princes, while those obey as slaves; and some fare sumptuously, while others eat nothing but the bread of sorrow; but as soon as death has inclosed them altogether in the grave, they then become equal.

All these comparisons are very just and elegant, as are likewise many others of the same kind. They instruct us and flatter our imaginations; but then they contain nothing that is capable of administering any solid comfort; insomuch that there is not one of these learned doctors to whom we may not apply that expression wherewith the servant of God reproached his importunate friends, who added affliction to the afflicted: "Ye are all physicians of no value; how then comfort ye me in vain?" Job xiii. 4; xxi. 34.

When a person is visited with a violent fit of gout or stone, that forces from him the deepest sighs and groans, if any one should offer to draw his picture and represent his distorted looks and grimaces, or to mimic them theatrically in his presence, he would give little ease to his pain, but would rather increase his torment and vexation. Or as the most beautiful flowers can afford no delight to one who is stretched upon the rack, or burning in the midst of flames, or on the point of being torn to pieces by wild horses; so the most eloquent and florid discourse can administer no comfort to a poor soul that is just upon its departure. The harp of David alone can drive away the evil spirits, and still the tumults of a troubled conscience.

But some perhaps may imagine, that in this general survey of the learned follies and studied vanities of the Heathen philosophers, I should except the Stoics. I confess indeed that they express themselves upon this subject with more gravity, but they are altogether as unsuccessful as the others. Nay, when I have well considered them, I find that they are far more impertinent and insufferable. For, besides that

they talk of immortality of the soul in a very doubtful and obscure manner, the pretended comforts that they offer render death more formidable.

They tell us that death is the end and centre of all human misery and affliction ; and that, consequently, it is rather to be sought for than avoided, more to be desired than feared. They would have some reason for this conclusion, had they discovered beyond the grave any happiness whereon to lay hold by a true and lively faith. But the only comfort death assures them of, is the putting a period to the calamities of this life; which, properly speaking, is not a comfort, but rather a foolish passion, much like that of a criminal upon the rack, who earnestly longs for death, that he may be delivered from the cruel hands of the executioner ; and thirsts with impatience to mount the scaffold, where he is to be broken upon the wheel. O miserable wretch! the change of punishment will bring no ease to thy pains. If thou canst not bear the cords that unjoint thy limbs, how wilt thou endure the bar of iron that shall break all thy bones to pieces? O blind philosopher! if thou canst not support the miseries of this life, how wilt thou undergo the agonies of death.

Moreover, they tell us, that the most painful and cruel death is a noble exercise for our virtue, and the most illustrious opportunity to display a heroic constancy. This at first appears very plausible, but in reality is nothing but wind. For of what service is this imaginary virtue? It hinders us from falling into the deepest abyss of misery and misfortune, and dies itself, with its possessor. Wherefore such as have most admired it, have at last acknowledged it to be nothing but vanity ; witness that renowned and worthy general, who flattered himself, that his virtue would make him victorious over all the enemies of the commonwealth, in whose quarrel he took up arms. When the battle was lost, and all his ambitious hopes had forsaken him, being ready to fall upon his own sword, he cried out, "O miserable virtue! what art thou, but a vain unprofitable word, a name without a being!" He exclaimed in this manner against the virtue he had formerly idolized, because it could yield him no comfort in the day of his distress, nor keep him from despair.

The most ordinary comforts they bring, and those they insist upon most, are these: that death is inevitable, that we all come into the world upon condition to go out of it; that we have as much cause to mourn for the day of our birth, as for the day of our death; that humanity and immortality

are incompatible, that death is a tribute we all owe to nature, that kings and the greatest emperors are forced to pay it, as well as the meanest of their subjects, and that this is such a universal law, that it neither admits, nor can admit of any exception.

But such comforts as these rather increase than abate our afflictions; and therefore compel me to say to these grave philosophers, what the importunity of his troublesome friends wrested from the mouth of holy Job, "Miserable comforters are ye all," Job xvi. 2. For, in truth, they not only search the wound to the quick, without applying any healing remedy, but they also tear and widen it, inflame and render it far more painful. So long as we have any hope to see an end to our calamities, we take comfort, and arm our minds with constancy. But when we see ourselves plunged into an abyss of misfortunes, without any prospect of getting out, our patience abandons us, and we are overwhelmed with despair. It is a lamentable thing to be born to die; but it is far more lamentable and mortifying to know that death cannot be avoided, and that all the treasures in the world cannot redeem us from it. He is doubly miserable whose affliction admits no cure.

It is also a false and dangerous maxim, that the comfort of the miserable is to have companions in their misery. Though many thousands drink together of the waters of Marah, they seem no less bitter to the taste; and though thou shouldst burn in a fire where multitudes are consumed, the flames will be no less violent. Thy neighbour's grief cannot alleviate thy affliction, his sickness cannot restore thy health, nor his death comfort thee against the approaches of thine own. On the contrary, if thou hast the least feeling of humanity, thou wilt weep for his misery and thine own together; as the great Xerxes, king of Persia, formerly did, when casting his eyes upon his prodigious army, in which there were numbered one million, one hundred thousand men, and reflecting that within a hundred years all those brave captains and soldiers would be rotting in their graves, he was moved with compassion, and burst into tears.

I shall pass by, as not worthy of notice, and foolish, the brutal opinion of those who believe that the souls of men are mortal, and perish with their bodies. This consideration, instead of bringing comfort, casts us into an irrecoverable despair: for next to the torments of hell, nothing can be imagined more dreadful than the being reduced to a state of non-entity.

Neither shall I stay to discuss the doctrines of the Platonists, who have treated of the immortality of the soul, and its happiness after death. They fancy themselves masters of a great deal of subtlety ; but their discourses on this subject are so gross and extravagant, that instead of persuading us of the truth of their opinion, they expose it to our contempt and ridicule ; witness their fond and chimerical description of the Elysian fields. For whatever they have invented of this kind has been ranked amongst the poetical fictions. Those imaginary subterraneous gardens contain nothing that may be compared to the divine excellencies, and unspeakable pleasures of the paradise of God.

In a word, search all the rarest and most precious treasures of Heathen antiquity ; turn over the writings of the most eloquent orators, the subtlest philosophers, and the most celebrated poets ; examine all the secrets of those great and learned physicians, consider their practice, and all the remedies they prescribe to the soul, and you shall find them too unskilful to perform any real cure. They only charm the disease, and to flatter the wound take away the sense of the pain ; they furnish us with a good exterior, and teach us to set a good face upon the matter ; but they have no true antidote against the venom that destroys the principle of life, nor any remedy that reaches to their heart. As the brooks that dry up in hot weather, so are all the comforts that flow from the fountain of life ; they vanish away, and dry up to nothing, when deep sorrow, fear and dismay, have seized upon a sinful soul.

The inventors of the Pagan superstitions seem, in some measure, to have been sensible of this truth. For they dedicated temples and erected altars, to all manner of gods and goddesses, not only to the virtues, and to health, but also to vices and diseases ; as to fear, cowardice, anger, the fever, pestilence, and an infinite number of others. But not one was dedicated to death ; which is an open acknowledgment, that they knew not how to mollify death and win its favour. They had no sacrifice nor incense that could appease its fury. They looked upon it as their most cruel and implacable enemy. The very name of death struck them with horror, and was therefore accounted one of their most unfortunate omens.

The emperor Adrian is a convincing proof of what I say. He was one of the greatest princes that ever reigned : he reduced the greatest part of the world to his obedience, and put to death a prodigious number of men ; but at last he

himself trembled, and was horribly dismayed at the approaches of death. He had conquered the most barbarous nations, and tamed the most savage beasts; but so far was he from conquering this last enemy, that he had no weapons fit for the encounter. On this occasion he discovered the weakness and inconstancy of his mind, which, without dispute, was far more distempered than his body. Sometimes he had recourse to magic arts to retard death; and sometimes he endeavoured, with his sword, or with poison, to hasten it. At length he killed himself, by abstaining from the food necessary to support life. He had given laws to all the world, and peace and happiness to his empire; but he could not govern his own distracted thoughts, nor give repose to his conscience. He was so far from endeavouring to calm the trouble and agitation of his mind, that he shamefully abandoned himself to despair. He flattered his soul while he hastened its ruin; talking to it in this or the like manner, when his disorder allowed him an easy minute, "My little soul, my dearest companion, thou art now going to wander in obscure, cold and strange places; thou shalt never jest again according to thy wonted manner; thou shalt never afford me any more sport or pleasure."

You'll say, perhaps, that Adrian was a potent prince, but no great philosopher; that he was very well versed in politics, but not much acquainted with morals; and that although he was a perfect master in the art to reign well, yet he wanted the skill to die well. Let us therefore give an example that is liable to no exception, and at once stop the mouth of objection.

Aristotle is generally esteemed to have been the most learned and subtle of all the philosophers that flourished among the Heathens. Accordingly he is styled, the prince of philosophers; the light of the age he lived in; and the chief and most precious ornament of his sect. This extraordinary genius expatiated every where; he mounted up into the heavens, and searched into all the excellencies of the earth; he carefully examined all the wonders that appear in creation, and with a surprising facility discovered the rarest secrets of nature. Yet he could never find any solid comfort against the apprehensions of death. Notwithstanding all his admirable subtleties, and profound learning, the terrors of inexorable death so amazed his conscience, that he was forced to cry out, "Of all terrible things, death is the most dreadful."

CHAPTER III.

Of divers sorts of Death with which we are to encounter.

When David had a design to fight with Goliah, and could not make use of the armour of king Saul, he took a smooth stone out of his bag, cast it with his sling, struck the Philistine in the forehead, and brought down this proud giant, who had defied the armies of Israel. We have already examined and tried all the armour of human wisdom and learning, laid up in the storehouses of the greatest wits of former ages; and we have found that they are not able to afford us any assistance in an encounter with death. Let us, therefore, now see whether we may overcome this proud enemy with the sling of our mystical David, with the weapons of our divine shepherd: but, before we begin the resistance, let us look and behold it in the face. The enemy I intend you shall overcome, is a monster with three heads; for there are three sorts of death; the natural, the spiritual, and the eternal.

The natural death is a separation of the soul from the body. Although our body hath been fashioned with the finger of God, it is but a weak and frail vessel made of earth; but our soul is a heavenly, spiritual and immortal substance; it is a spark and ray of the divinity, and the lively image of our great Creator; for when God had made our first parent, "he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life," Gen. ii. 7, that we might thereby understand, that our souls alone proceeded from his immediate hand; therefore he is named the Father of Spirits, Heb. xii., and the faithful Creator of souls, 1 Pet. iv. This soul raises us a degree above all animals, and above the celestial bodies, and renders us like the angels of heaven. It is the light that enlightens us, the salt that preserves us from corruption. In one word, by this soul we live, enjoy our senses, move and understand. As soon as this angelical guest leaves its mansion, the body, it loseth all its beauty, and falls of itself into a state of ruin; for this flesh that we are so careful of, and feed with all manner of dainties, then corrupts and rots. After that it hath been stretched awhile upon beds of gold, and richly

attired in purple and scarlet, it is cast upon a bed of worms, and covered with the vilest insects of the earth. Notwithstanding all its former perfumes, it yields then a most horrid smell; before it ravished the eyes of the beholders with its admirable beauty; but now it becomes so odious and offensive, that the living care not to see it. It is at last reduced to ashes, according to the sentence that was pronounced in the earthly paradise: "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return."

The spiritual death is the separation of the soul from God our Creator; for he being the soul of our souls, and the light of our life, we fall into an abyss of darkness and death: "For all those that depart from God shall perish," Psal. lxxiii. As the members when they are cut off from the body, commonly rot; as the twig withers when it is separated from the vine; so, in a separation from God, we can neither live, move, nor have a being. And as it is with the body separated from the soul, it nourishes a nest of worms that devour it, and sends forth a most insufferable stench, so it is with our soul at a distance from God: it yields those evil affections that torment and consume it; and the ill scent of its crimes is offensive to heaven and earth. Of this kind of death our Saviour speaks to the Jews in this manner: "If you do not believe that I am he, you shall die in your sins," John viii. And to the angel of the church at Sardis, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead," Rev. iii. The same death St Paul mentions in the second chapter of the Colossians, and the second chapter of the Ephesians; "When we are dead in our trespasses and sins, God hath quickened us together with Christ." And elsewhere he exhorts a sinful man, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light," Eph. v. And it is of the same kind of death that St Paul speaks concerning the wanton widow, that "she is dead while she liveth," 1 Tim. v.

It was this kind of death that Adam suffered as soon as he had tasted of the forbidden fruit, according to God's threatening: "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." For not only his body became mortal and subject to rottenness, but his soul also was involved in the death of sin, and enslaved to corruption. It happened to him as to a lamp, which is no sooner put out, than it diffuses a most noisome scent.

As the life of grace is a preparative to the life of glory, and furnishes us with the foretaste of the heavenly joys; so,

on the contrary, the carnal life is, as it were, the suburbs of hell; it is the first beginning of an eternal death, and the entrance into the infernal pit. The eternal death is nothing else but an entire and irrecoverable separation of the soul and body from God, accompanied with infinite torments; torments, indeed, unto which all the sufferings of this mortal life are light and inconsiderable: nevertheless, as the spirit of God represents the heavenly joys and felicities by things that are most pleasant and delightful; so, to express to us hell-torments, it borrows things that are the most dreadful and painful in this life: we are told of an "abyss or furnace full of flames, a bottomless pit burning with fire and brimstone." The scripture mentions "chains of darkness, an eternal light, and a hell-fire, where there are weeping and gnashing of teeth." It tells us that "Tophet is ordained of old, yea, for the king it is prepared, he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood: the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone doth kindle it," Isa. xxx. 33.

Fancy to yourselves a man devoured with worms, burning in hot flames, in continual torments, in whose wounds kindled brimstone is poured without intermission, with boiling lead and burning pitch; if there be any other pains more sharp and grievous, fancy them also. All this will give us but a little and imperfect image of the state of hell; for all the pangs of the body are nothing in comparison to the horrors, troubles, and incredible griefs that shall for ever rack and torture the damned souls.

As shame aggravates our sufferings, and renders them more terrible, the damned shall be loaded with shame and infamy to all eternity; their names shall be hateful to God and his holy angels, and they shall be cursed with an endless curse. And as it is an increase to our torment to suffer in the company of abominable varlets, and to become a companion of the most infamous rascals; they shall suffer with hell's executioner, and shall be sent to the fire prepared for the devil and his angels. All their senses shall share in these horrid torments; they shall be crushed in the wine-press of God's eternal wrath, and they shall feel for ever and ever the strokes of God's vengeance, and of his almighty hand. They shall then learn, by experience, what a terrible thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God, and how insufferable that fire is, that shall consume his enemies. Their eyes shall perceive nothing but the bottomless pit, the devil's image, and the furies of hell; their ears shall hear nothing

but the horrible outcries and fearful roarings of tormented devils and damned souls. They shall be choaked with the noisome smell and fumes of the bottomless pit: they shall then drink the very dregs and bottom of God's anger and indignation, and they shall suck the venom of his arrows: "fire and brimstone shall be the portion of their cup."

The sufferings of this life are but short, and for a moment; but the torments of the damned shall never end; "Their worm dieth not, and their fire shall never be quenched," Mark ix. Rev. xx. They shall be tormented day and night to all eternity. When they shall have suffered as many thousand ages, as there be drops of water in the sea, or grains of sand on the shore, it shall be but as the beginning of their grief. They shall live for ever to die continually; and they shall die, and never be consumed. In the midst of these hot flames, they shall beg a drop of water to cool their tongue, Luke xvi.; but we may say of the fire that shall torture the damned, what the spouse in the Canticles saith of the divine love that had inflamed her soul: "Many waters cannot quench it, neither can the floods drown it," Cant. viii. And St Paul tells us, "That the things that God hath prepared for them that love him, eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor did it ever enter into the heart of man," 1 Cor. ii. So, on the contrary, we may say, that those things that God hath prepared for them that hate him, "eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor did it ever enter into the heart of man." From hence shall proceed their rage, madness and despair: they shall cry in Cain's language, "My punishment is greater than I can bear," Gen. iv. When they shall see nothing but an extreme misery and woful darkness, they shall curse God the king of all creatures, Isa. viii. In their fury and rage they will bite their tongues, and blaspheme the great God of heaven and earth. It had been far better for such persons, that they had never been born; therefore they shall seek death and shall not find it, Matt. xxvi. They shall desire to die, that is, to be reduced to nothing, Rev. ix. But this death shall fly from them. Who of you can dwell in eternal flames? Rev. vi. If the phials and little cups full of God's wrath force the wicked to cry out, how much more shall the rivers and the ocean of God's vengeance draw from them? "O mountains, fall on us, O rocks cover us, and hide us from the face of him that sits upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the day of his wrath is come, and who may abide it?" But as they have stopped their ears to God's gracious calls, and hardened their hearts

to his invitation to repentance, God shall also stop his ear to their outcries, and his eyes to their grievous sufferings; and when they shall be overcome with fear and despair, God will scorn and mock at their insufferable misery.

CHAPTER IV.

That the Lord Jesus Christ hath redeemed us from eternal death, and, by degrees, rescues us from a spiritual death.

We read in the fifth chapter of the Revelations of St John, that he wept bitterly, because no being in heaven and earth, nor under the earth, was able to open the book sealed with seven seals, that was in God's right hand. At that instant one of the twenty-four elders spake to him: "Weep not, behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals." Thus we have until now wept bitterly, because we could find nobody in the armies of Israel to encounter with that powerful monster, Death. But let us also wipe our tears, and take good courage, my beloved; for this same Lion of the tribe of Judah is appointed to fight with this dreadful enemy: our victorious and triumphing David, who had torn in pieces the infernal Lion, bruised the ancient serpent's head, and "spoiled principalities and powers, triumphing over them in his cross," Col. ii. 15. It is he that hath undertaken this glorious combat; it was for that purpose that he left for a while the throne of God the Father, and the company of his holy angels, 1 Sam. xvii. It was for that intent that he came into the camp and confusion of Israel. He hath not borrowed the weapons and assistance of the world, Heb. ii. All that he hath taken from us is our frail nature. But, "he hath armed himself with righteousness, as with a breast-plate, and hath put on the helmet of salvation. He hath clothed himself with a vengeance as with a cloak; he hath trodden the wine-press and nobody hath assisted him," Isa. lix. lxiii. But his arm hath saved him, and his hand hath upheld him; as David cut off Goliah's head with his own sword, Jesus Christ hath overcome death by death. Like unto the strong Sampson, he hath destroyed all the enemies of his glory by his death, 1 Sam.

xvii. He hath overcome, in dying, him who had the empire of death, that is, the devil, Heb. ii., and hath delivered them, "who through the fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Then was fulfilled the saying of Hosea, "O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction," Hos. xiii. And that of Isaiah, "He will swallow death up in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces, and the rebuke of his people shall be taken away from all the earth," Isa. xxv. 1 Tim. vi. This blessed prince, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who only hath immortality, and dwelleth in inaccessible light, hath destroyed death, and brought to light life and immortality by the gospel, 1 Tim. i. "O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. xv.

This great God and Saviour has perfectly redeemed us from eternal death, as he himself teaches us in the gospel of St John: "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life," ch. v. 24. "I am the living bread, which came down from Heaven; if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever," ch. vi. 51. ver. 49. "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead; this is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die," ch. viii. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my word, he shall never taste of death. I am the resurrection and the life; he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die; and he that believeth in me, although he were dead yet shall he live," ch. xi. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ," Rom. vi. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection. The second death shall never have any power upon him," Rev. xx. In a word, the gates of hell, that is to say, death, cannot prejudice them who are settled upon Jesus Christ, the rock of eternity. This merciful Saviour hath also delivered us from the spiritual death, Eph. ii. For we being dead in our trespasses and sins, he hath quickened us, and raised us up together unto newness of life, Col. ii. He hath carried our sins in his body, upon the cross, that he, dying unto sin, we might live unto righteousness, 1 Pet. ii. We are buried with him in his death by baptism, that as Jesus Christ is raised from the dead by the glory of God the Father, we should also

walk in the newness of life, Rom. vi. "Awake thou that sleepest, and rise from the dead, and Jesus Christ shall enlighten thee," Eph. v. For by his death he has not only reconciled us to God the Father, Rom. vi., Col. i., but he hath also procured to us the Holy Spirit that creates in us a new heart, and imprints the image of his holiness, Ezek. xxxvi., 2 Cor. v. He makes us become new creatures, and regenerates us by the incorruptible seed, 1 Pet. i. This is that which the scripture names the first resurrection, Rev. xx. St Peter was ravished in admiration at this great and wonderful benefit, and therefore he acknowledged it: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," 1 Pet. i. God discovered to the prophet Ezekiel a field covered with dry bones, and commanded him to prophecy upon these bones, Ezek. xxxvii. At the prophet's command, they began to draw near to one another; then the nerves began to appear, the flesh to grow and to be covered with skin; but there was no life till God commanded the prophet to prophecy again, "Thus saith the Lord, Spirit, come from the four winds, blow upon these dead bodies, and let them rise from the dead." Then the spirit entered into them, they began to revive, and they stood upon their legs. This is the lively and true image of the first resurrection; for the spirit of God that blows where it listeth, regenerates us by degrees, Job iii, and the new man is created in our hearts by little and little as the child grows in the mother's womb.

When Joshua brought the children of Israel into the land of promise, he destroyed not all the Canaanites, Josh. xxiii., there remained some who became scourges in their sides, and thorns in their eyes. Thus our true and spiritual Joshua, who has let us into the kingdom of his grace, hath not altogether destroyed all our evil affections; some yet remain, that are like prickles in our sides, and like swords that pierce through our souls. They yet render our life bitter and unpleasant; therefore we often desire death to come and put a period to this conflict. Sin was in possession of us, as a strong man armed in a house; but Jesus Christ is entered into our souls, and become master; he hath therefore bound and chained sin, and hath nailed it to his cross. But this furious beast, though he hath received a mortal wound, and is ready to give up the last grasp, yet struggles and foams within us. Our blessed Saviour hath extinguished with the

real stream of his blood, the infernal flames of our cursed affections; but yet there remain in the ashes some sparkles of this devilish fire, that yet cause in us feverish fits. Only this merciful Redeemer, of his infinite goodness, hath loosed us from the devil's chains; but that we might have cause to be humble, to desire the increase of grace, and long for the arrival of his glory, he leaves about us some of the troublesome fetters; by his holy spirit he files them off by degrees; but one day he will take them away from us.

At the voice of this Prince of Life, that reaches to the very bottom of our hearts, we are risen from the sepulchre of our vices with our grave-clothes about us, as Lazarus when he came out of his tomb. We are like the ancient slaves who were set at liberty; we bear upon our foreheads the visible marks of our ancient bondage; but one day our Lord Jesus shall cover these marks of infamy and disgrace with a heavenly diadem. If you desire another image of our spiritual condition, fancy to yourselves a dead man cast into a foul pit or sink, unto whom life is restored in a moment; afterwards by degrees he is washed and cleansed of that filth that covered his body. We were not only dead of a spiritual death, but we were also overwhelmed in an abyss of corruption and filth. The Son of God hath pulled us out of this abyss, and already restored us to life, but the dirt and putrefaction with which we are disfigured, he washes away with the water of grace, Zech. xiii. "For there is a fountain open for sin in the house of David," Isa. iv., in which God hath promised to wash away all the filth of the daughters of Zion, and all the blood of Jerusalem. And as it happened to cruel king Adonibezek, when the tribe of Judah took him prisoner, he lost the thumbs of his hands and the great toes of his feet, but he suffered not death till he came to Jerusalem; thus our great God and Saviour, the Prince of the tribe of Judah, hath cut off the strength and power of the old man, who tyrannized in our souls, and hath deprived him of his venomous nails, with which he wounded our hearts; he hath also given him a mortal wound, but he suffers him to enjoy a languishing life, and will not take away his last breath, until we bring him to the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem.

But to speak more openly; sin is yet in us, but it reigneth not: for our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ hath broken its sceptre, and pulled it from the throne; and as he hath taken from it all command in us, he constrains it to leave the possession of our souls by degrees. As a strong and mighty

king, who having won the battle, pursues and drives the enemy, until he hath totally expelled them out of his kingdon; so doth our Saviour deal with sin.

And as it happens to a woman with child in her old age, there are in her body two contrary lives, that of the mother and that of the child, the one decays and dies insensibly, the child's life grows and increaseth by degrees; so it is in the faithful and regenerate soul; there are two lives; that of sin, that the scripture names the old man; and that of the new man, which is created according to God in righteousness and true holiness; the one diminishes and draws to its final end; but the other grows and gathers strength, until we arrive to the perfect stature of our Lord Jesus Christ; the spirit of God every day gets ground of our corruption and weakness.

CHAPTER V.

Why we are yet subjected to the corporal or natural death, and what advantage we thereby receive in Jesus Christ.

The wise king teacheth us in the ninth Ecclesiastes, *That the same accident happens to all, to the righteous and to the wicked, to the clean and to the polluted, to him that sacrificeth and to him that sacrificeth not.* These words are to be understood of the several afflictions unto which we are exposed during this mortal life; but we may apply them to the natural death: *For it is appointed unto all men once to die, and after that judgment follows*, Heb. ix. By one man sin is entered into the world, and by sin death; and thus death is come upon all men because they have all sinned, Rom. v. Therefore, when Joshua felt himself feeble and decaying, he told the children of Israel, *That he was going the way of all flesh*, Josh. xxiii. And Job complains unto God, *I know that thou wilt reduce me unto death, and to the house appointed for all living*, Job xxx. It was upon this subject that the royal prophet was exercising his meditation, when he cried out, *Who is he that liveth, and shall not see death? Shall he free his soul from the power of the grave?* Ps. lxxxix. And to speak the lan-

guage of Solomon, *Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel be broken at the cistern:* that is to say, the back-bone, where marrow is as white as silver, be loosed; when the skull, which is like a precious vessel of gold, be broken; when the vena cava receives no more blood from the liver, the fountain of life; when the lights, which draw in and push forth the breath, move no more; or when the kidneys, which extract the humidity from the veins, and cause it to drop down into a bladder as into a cistern, begin to fail; *Then shall the body return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God that gave it.*

To express to us this inevitable fate, Moses reckons all the ancient fathers, who have lived longest in the first world; he mentions one who lived seven hundred, others eight hundred, others nine hundred years, and some near one thousand, Gen. v. But when he had well spoken of their deeds, and of their children which they left behind, he adds, in the conclusion of all, and then such an one died. Thus our Creator executes upon all men the sentence pronounced against Adam, the father of all mankind, "*Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return.*"

By this means God declared his justice and truth, and accomplished what was signified by the ancient types, Lev. xiv. For according to the laws which God gave to Israel by Moses, the house that was infected with leprosy, was to be demolished and cast into a noisome place. There is a more urgent cause for a man's body to be destroyed, and laid in the sepulchre, because he was created to be the palace of the living God, the dwelling of his glory; but sin, a kind of infectious leprosy, hath insinuated itself, and disfigured it; hath entered the skin, corrupted the blood, disordered the spirits, crept into the joints and marrow, and hath spread its venom in such a manner that there is none of our members but are instruments of iniquity and unrighteousness, Rom. vi. For the same reason, we cannot sufficiently admire the difference which God hath put between the vessels that were clean, and such as were unclean; for he commanded, that the earthen vessels infected should be broken in pieces, Lev. xi., but that such as were of a more valuable substance should be only washed with water, and purified with fire, Numb. xxxi. The commands and laws of the great God are excellent commentaries upon his actions. Our soul is like a golden vessel, because it is a spiritual and heavenly substance, therefore God doth not altogether destroy

it, although it be infected with sin; but caused it to be washed and cleansed at the fountain of his infinite mercy. He purifies it with the blood of his Son, and causes it to pass through the fire of his holy spirit. But for this miserable body, and earthly vessel and tabernacle, he breaks it to pieces, and reduces it to dust and ashes. It is my judgment that death is an excellent means to demonstrate the infinite power of our great God and Saviour: for the greater the distance is, the more admirable is the cure, and without doubt, the finger of God in his infinite power is far more visible in raising one man from the dead, than preserving many thousands alive.

As God is wont to lighten our darkness, so he makes use of death, to cause his infinite wisdom to shine and appear in all his creatures. Sin hath brought forth death, and death, on the contrary, as a most fortunate parricide, kills and destroys its parent, sin; for it is death that totally roots out of our souls all corrupt affections.

Moreover, God, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, Heb. xiii., will have all his children pass through the same path, to take possession of his eternal inheritance, and enter by the same gate into his royal palace. All the faithful in the Old Testament are gone already this way; *through many tribulations*, Acts xiv., they are arrived at the kingdom of God, and through death they are come to the abode of life and immortality. The holy scriptures, that are inspired of God, tells us, that the Reubenites, and half the tribe of Manasses, Numb. xxxii., Josh. i., left their dwellings which they had beyond Jordan, to go over and fight in the army of Israel, and did not offer to return, until God had given rest to their brethren, and put them into a peaceable possession of their inheritances. If I may make some stop at such an elegant allegory, I may say, that these passages represent to us a lively figure of the faithful who die before the end of the world: for they leave their bodies, the abode and dwellings of their souls, and pass through death, as through another Jordan, into the celestial Canaan, to encounter with God by their prayers, in the society of the first born, whose names are registered in heaven, and they will not return again to their bodies, until the number of the saints be complete, until the building of the church be finished, and until our great Joshua hath introduced us into his eternal rest, and put us in possession of the incorruptible inheritances reserved for us in heaven. Then we shall not need to fight, but to enjoy peaceably the fruits of our victories,

and to rest for ever from our labours. We shall have no cause to offer to God prayers and supplications; but our business shall be to sing unto him praises and eternal thanksgivings.

The more considerable reason, in my judgment, of our destiny, is, that God hath predestinated us to be conformable to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren; he will have us to be baptized with his baptism, and drink in his cup, and enter into bliss by the same gate, through which he hath already passed. Through shame and disgrace he is arrived to glory, and through death he is entered into life. He hath drunk the cup of the bitter waters, before he tasted of the river of celestial joys; and he went down into the grave before he would mount up to the right hand of God.

Although it is appointed unto all men once to die, Heb. ix., I dare affirm, that death has no cause to triumph, because the chief advantage is not on that side. We read in the book of Esther, that king Ahasuerus would not recall the proclamation that he had sent forth against the Jews, but he gave full liberty to take up arms to defend themselves, to attack their enemies, and to make them suffer all the mischief they intended against them. I find something like unto this proceeding, for God would not call back the sentence of death pronounced against mankind in the garden of Eden; nevertheless, he allows us, nay, he commands his true Israel, to take up arms against death, to conquer and trample it under feet.

In the first place Jesus Christ, our head, hath encountered with death and overcome it; he hath pursued it unto its trenches, and baffled it in its own fortification; death thought to have devoured him, but it hath been devoured itself. As the fishes are taken by the hook that they think to swallow; and as the bees hurt those whom they sting; but do greater harm to themselves; for they break their stings, and lose thereby their lives; thus death by fixing its sting in the humanity of Jesus Christ, hath put him to a great deal of pain for a time, but it hath thereby lost all strength and vigour for ever.

The men of Judah, to satisfy the enraged Philistines, delivered into their hands Sampson bound with ropes. When they saw him they gave several joyful shouts; but the spirit of God came upon him in such a manner, that he tore in pieces the two ropes wherewith he was bound, and overcame them by whom he was to be led away prisoner, and killed a thousand of them. Thus the miserable Jews, for fear of the

Romans, delivered unto them our Lord Jesus Christ, their brother, according to the flesh, bound like a malefactor. When hell saw him nailed to the cross, and afterwards laid in the grave, it did wonderfully rejoice; the devil and his angels began to sing songs of triumph. But it was altogether impossible, that the Prince of Life should be detained in the prisons of death. He hath not only broken out of the grave by his infinite power, but hath also trampled under feet all his most furious enemies, and overcome millions of infernal fiends. And to declare how life and death were in his power, he baffled death, when he was, as it were, a prisoner, shut up in his dungeon. He hath broken open the gates of this black prison, and torn in pieces all his fetters: for when he was yet in the grave, he raised to life many that were dead, who were seen in the holy city; and yet at present he holds in his hands the keys of death and of hell. Therefore, as children rejoice at their father's victory, and as the subjects are concerned at the prosperous proceeding of their king, and as the members are the better for the glory and honour of their head; thus we may justly glory in the most notable victories and famous triumphs of Jesus Christ, who is our Father, King and Head. We may also justly glory, that we are lords of death, and that we have overcome it in the person of our great God and Saviour. In saying this I speak with the apostle, who affirms, *That God hath quickened us together, and raised us together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*, Eph. ii. 5, 6.

Moreover, as our Redeemer hath once overcome death for us, so he continues to subdue it in us, and by us. He suffers us not to encounter with our enemies unprovided, nor deserts us in our time of need; but as, in the day of battle, a wise and provident general has his eyes on every side, and encourages, by his voice and gestures, all those whom he perceives to be engaged with the enemy; such as behave themselves valiantly, he animates with praises and promises; the weak he assists; and to such as are overborne he sends a reinforcement: so our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the great God of Hosts, who sits in triumph in the heavens, beholds with attention all our combats; and when he perceives the fight to be unequal, lest we should sink beneath the assaults of such a powerful and dreadful enemy, on the one hand he clothes us with his holy spirit, and furnishes us with his own armour, as Jonathan did David, when he gave him his mantle, his bow, his sword, and his belt; and on the

other, he disarms death of all his most dangerous weapons, and wrests from him all his darts.

As the strength and power of Sampson was lodged in the hair of his head, which the Philistines could never have imagined ; so the strength and power of death consists in such things as the world least thinks of. The most terrible weapons with which it assaults us, are the thunderbolts and curses of the law, and our sins are the poison in which it dips its arrows, or rather they themselves are the fiery darts with which it wounds our souls. Now, Jesus Christ *hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, when he was made a curse for us*, Gal. iii. 13. *He bare our sins in his own body on the tree*, 1 Pet. ii. 24 ; and like the he goat Hazazel, hath carried them away into an uninhabited wilderness, Lev. xvi. 22. He hath removed them from before the face of God, as far as the east is from the west, Psal. ciii. 12. *He hath cast them into the depths of the sea*, Mic. vii. 19, and hath drowned them in his own blood. So that we may now see fulfilled what was foretold by the prophet Jeremiah, *The iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none ; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found*, ch. l. 20.

Therefore, having put on the grace of God, and being armed with the strength of his holy spirit, let us be valiant with a holy valour, and give a brave defiance to death ; let us look it in the face without dread, laugh at all its menaces, and encounter it without fear. For it is now like a boasting soldier, who threatens without weapons ; like an angry bee without a sting ; an old lion that roars, but which hath lost its claws ; or like a snake that would instil its poison, but whose teeth have been all pulled out by him who hath bruised the serpent's head, Gen. iii. 15.

If we look no farther than the exterior of death, and only consider his ghastly visage, its frightful eyes, its meagre body, its iron hand, and its inevitable scythe, we can perceive no difference between the death of God's children and that of the wicked : but if we lift up its mask and take away its deceitful veil, we shall find as much difference between them, as there is between heaven and earth, the paradise of God and hell.

As the brazen serpent which Moses set up in the desert, had all the form and appearance of a fiery serpent, but nothing of the poison and fire, Numb. xxi.; so the death of the faithful appears, to external view, as the death of other men, but hath none of the deadly and pernicious consequences.

For it is not only a sign of his grace, and a testimony of his favour, but the beginning of our deliverance, and the cure of all our diseases. When Moses had cast of the tree into the waters of Marah, they still retained their colour, but not the same bitterness and unpleasant relish ; so the death of God's children retains the same tincture and appearance as it had before ; but the cross of Jesus Christ hath taken away all its agonizing terrors, and hath changed its insupportable bitterness into a sweetness like the sweets of heaven.

Like Pharaoh, with all his hosts, was drowned in the waters of the Red Sea, but the children of Israel passed safely through them into the promised land, and being arrived upon the other shore of that dreadful sea, sang unto God songs of triumph and thanksgiving, Exod. xiv. ; so death opens its jaws, and swallows up the wicked ; but with respect to the children of God, it is a safe passage to a life of eternal bliss ; they pass through it in a moment, and immediately find themselves in a place of assurance, joy and rest, where God puts into their mouths the song of Moses, and the song of the Lamb, Rev. xv. 3.

The rod in Moses's hand was turned into a serpent ; but when it was placed in the tabernacle, before the testimony, it blossomed and bore almonds. Thus while we are under the dominion of the law, death puts on the appearance of terror and despair, but as soon as we draw near to Christ, the true ark of the covenant, it produces fruits of joy and eternal comfort.

The false prophet Balaam, was sent for to curse the people of God ; but he blessed them, contrary to the vain expectations of Balak, king of Moab, Numb. xxiii. and xxiv. Thus death was brought into the world by the devil, to destroy and utterly exterminate the holy seed ; but God, by his infinite goodness and incomprehensible wisdom, hath changed it into salvation and blessing. Let us therefore perplex ourselves no longer to find out and explain the meaning of Sampson's riddle ; *Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness*, Judg. xiv. 14. For the church of God, unto whom Jesus Christ, her beloved spouse, hath discovered all the choicest secrets of his kingdom, teaches us to seek for the honey of the most sweet consolations, in the belly of this old lion.

We cannot judge of a piece of music by a single note, or of an oration by a period, nor of a comedy by a scene. So we must not judge of a battle by the first onset, nor of a wrestling by the first embraces and efforts of the wrestlers. For

some in the beginning of the battle turn their backs, who at last win the victory and come off with triumph ; and some in wrestling are foiled at the beginning, who nevertheless supplant their adversary, and cast him upon the ground. Therefore, that we may the better understand the great and glorious advantages that we have over death, let us take a view of our encounter with it from the first to the last, and carefully remark what we win, and what we lose, in our conflicts with this cruel and implacable enemy.

The taper of our life is no sooner lighted, but Satan sends forth his blasts from every quarter to extinguish it. This poor dwelling is scarcely built, but death labours to destroy it, and besiege it on every side ; we perceive not its approaches, though by the help of time, it undermines us, and batters us to pieces with a variety of diseases, and a train of unforeseen accidents. Every day it makes some breach, and displaces some part of this building. But if death on one hand labours to demolish, we, on the other, labour to repair; and as those who built the walls of Jerusalem, held in one hand the trowel, and in the other a sword, to defend themselves, Neh. iv. 17, in the same manner we guard ourselves, as well as we are able, against the assaults of death ; and not only endeavour to preserve this earthly tenement, that God hath set us for a term, and to keep that in repair, but also in the very face of death, when it calls us to the combat, we advance our spiritual building, and labour to bring it to perfection ; so that we say with the apostle St Paul, *Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day*, 2 Cor. iv. 16.

To speak properly, death attacks nothing but the outward man ; for as to our principal fort and chief bulwark, it fears neither mine, nor assault ; for it is raised above the heavens, and built upon the rock of eternity : it cannot be battered; for as neither thunder, hail, nor tempest, can prejudice the sun-beams, because they are of a celestial nature, so all the fury of the world, all the powers of hell, and the rage of death, can never hurt the soul, which is of a spiritual and immortal nature. This fortress can never be famished ; for God rains upon it manna from heaven ; and from the rock upon which it is built, there flows a stream of living waters, that rise to everlasting life. In a word, as the serpent creeps only upon the dust, so death has no power but upon the earthly part of God's children ; whence our Lord Jesus Christ admonishes his apostles, *Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul*, Matt. x. 28.

At the moment of the soul's separation from the body, death seems to have a great advantage over us; but all things considered, we shall find, that he triumphs without a cause, and that he hath no reason to boast of the victory. When a valiant captain marches, with his sword in hand, out of a town that is almost destroyed, to throw himself into another that is more secure and better fortified, we say, that he has abandoned the place, and not that he is overcome. Thus when the wretched body falls in ruins, and our soul departs, well armed with faith and hope, to possess herself of a more secure abode in the highest heavens, no one can say, to speak properly, that the Christian is overcome. As it fares with those who sail upon the sea, when a violent tempest threatens them with shipwreck, they think themselves happy, if, by leaving their vessels to the mercy of the waves, they can escape with their lives and riches. Thus it is with us who sail upon the tempestuous sea of this world; when death raises his most cruel storms, we think ourselves happy if we can leave this miserable body, which is, as it were, a ship to the soul, and escape with our spiritual life and heavenly treasures. Therefore we may say to the faithful, that are affrighted when death threatens to drown them in its depths, as St Paul to the ship's company, who trembled for fear, in the midst of the waves of an enraged sea; Now, I exhort you to be of good cheer; for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship, Acts xxvii. 22. Nay, we can furnish them with yet stronger comforts; for these poor mariners lost their ship, without any hopes of ever recovering it; but we know that God will one day gather together all the pieces of the broken vessels of our bodies, and restore them to us in a much more perfect state.

Therefore death takes not our bodies from us by violence, but we quit them willingly: we tarry not till it turns us out; we prevent its summons, and give it free leave to enter: when we have packed up our baggage, we are at all hours ready to depart out of this wretched tenement, where we endure so many calamities; for here it rains defluxions, malignant vapours arise; the pillars and foundations tremble; the joints are loosed, the windows darkened, and burning fevers, like so many fires, consume us.

We must not pass over in silence, that the faithful call their death not only *a departure*, but *a departure from a tabernacle;* to teach us, that we should depart from hence with as much joy and readiness, as a soldier departs from his tent,

to go and rest himself in his quarters, after the hardships and fatigues of a bloody war; and with as much pleasure as the children of Israel left their camps in which they had remained in the wilderness, to enter into the sweet and pleasant rest of the land of Canaan.

This body is not only like to a hired house, or to a tabernacle that is carried up and down; but by reason of the sin and corruption with which it is defiled, it is become to our soul a kind of prison. Therefore death may be compared to the messenger sent in haste by king Pharaoh, to take Joseph out of the dungeon and bring him to his palace, Gen. xli. 14. The body that was created to be a pavilion of joy and honour, is become to our soul a wretched and doleful prison; and death is like to the fiery furnace of Babylon, that burnt and consumed the bands of the three children that were cast into it, without so much as hurting their apparel, Dan. iii. 27. It consumes and destroys the natural bands that detain our souls enslaved to the earth, but touches not their ornaments, their righteousness and sanctification. As the membrane that incloses the child in its mother's womb, or the shell in which the chicken is formed, so is our body; it must of necessity be broken before we can enter into eternal life. In a word, we may affirm, that the body, which was given to the soul for its palace, is become by sin its sepulchre, far more loathsome than ever was that of Lazarus; and that death is like the voice which cries unto us, *Lazarus come forth,* John xi. 43.

You see then, O ye faithful souls, that as Sampson took away the gates of the city of Gaza, and carried them up to the top of the hill, Judg. xvi.; so Jesus Christ, our true Sampson, hath taken away the gates of hell, and hath carried them up to the highest summit of glory: wherefore, instead of looking upon them, as heretofore, with horror, as the gates of hell, let us now contemplate them with raptures of joy, crying out as Jacob did at Bethel, *This is the gate of heaven*, Gen. xxviii. 17.

Seeing, therefore, that this is the nature of death, I think that men commonly make it too great concessions, and that we should by no means affirm those to be dead, whom God hath gathered into the bundle of life; for denominations should always be taken from principal parts. As it is in nature, there is no generation without corruption; and we usually call that a generation, when the thing engendered is more excellent than the thing corrupted; and, on the con-

trary, that corruption, when the thing corrupted excels the thing that is engendered. For the same reason, the change which happens to us when we remove out of this world, should rather be called a life than death. Though our body dies, and rots in the earth, our soul revives, and lives glorious in heaven; and this life which we leave here below amongst men, is nothing, in comparison with that which we shall enjoy above with Christ and his holy angels. God styles himself *the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob*, Exod. iii. 6. *Now he is not the God of the dead, but of the living*, Matt. xxii. 32.

I may also, without any hyperbole, affirm, that, even with respect to the body, the change which befalls us, when we leave this world, is not properly death, but a kind of sleep; as it is said in the prophecy of the prophet Daniel, *Many sleep in the dust of the earth*, ch. xii. 2; and in Isaiah, *That the righteous rest in their beds*, ch. lvii. Hence likewise our Lord Jesus Christ, speaking of Jairus's daughter, said, *The maid is not dead, but sleepeth*, Matt. ix. 24; and of Lazarus his friend, that was laid in the tomb, *Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that I may awake him*, John xi. 11. My dear brother, if thou art of the number of those whom Christ loveth, thy death will be but a kind of sleep of short continuance; and in a few days the Lord will raise thee up again: *For the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live*, John v. 25.

During the course of this life, the attacks of death are no other than slight skirmishes; the most sensible blow that it strikes, and to appearance the most dangerous, is when it separates the soul from the body; but the final and decisive combat, which shall put an end to all disputes, will not be till the day of judgment, when Christ himself will descend from heaven to assist us, with thousands and ten thousands of his saints. He shall descend with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the last trumpet shall sound, 1 Thess. iv. 16. Then will death make its last efforts to retain us in its dark prison, and our bones will be found without life or motion; but the spirit of God will breathe upon these dry bones, and they shall live, Ezek. xxxvii. As when the prophet Jonah had lain three days and three nights in the whale's belly, God commanded the fish to vomit him up upon the dry land, ch. ii. 10; so, when we shall have made our abode in the grave, the time that God, of his infinite wisdom, hath appointed, Death will be forced to restore all he hath

swallowed; and as Daniel came out of the lions' den very early in the morning, without having received any hurt from those savage beasts, Dan. vi. 23; so at the break of the last day, at the rising of the Son of righteousness, we shall all come out of death's deep dungeon; and as if he had sent his angels on purpose to stop the mouth of this old lion, we shall then find, that we have sustained no harm. Instead of devouring us, it will prove a faithful keeper of our bones. The Christian may then speak to death in the words of the phophet Micah, *Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me*, ch. vii. 8; and as Moses said unto Pharaoh, *We will go into the wilderness to sacrifice unto our God; we will go out of thine Egypt, with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds, there shall not an hoof be left behind*, Exod. x. 9. Thus we, being armed with a holy confidence, may talk to death: in spite of all thy rage and fury, we will go up into heaven, to sacrifice to our God everlasting praises; we shall get free from thy fetters, we, our wives and our children, our brothers and sisters, our parents and friends, and all the people of God, whom thou at present detainest in thy unrighteous prison. Notwithstanding the utmost efforts of thy cruel and infernal power, there shall not remain so much as a handful—no, not so much as the least grain of our ashes behind us.

When the Son of God shall appear from heaven, like a consuming fire, he shall burn up in a moment all the trophies of death; and it shall happen to this proud enemy, who tramples upon all mankind, as it happened to the kings of the Amorites mentioned in the Israelitish history, Joshua suffered them to live while he pursued his victory; but as soon as he had entirely defeated the rest of his enemies, he ordered them to be brought out of the cave, and commanded all his captains to tread upon their necks, and having slain them with his own sword, cast them into the cave, and caused great stones to be laid in the mouth thereof, Josh. x. Thus our true and heavenly Joshua suffers death to reign, while he pursues his conquest; *For the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death*, 1 Cor. xv. 26. But when he shall have entirely subdued all his other enemies, to crown all his victories with a glorious end, and complete his church's triumph, he shall cause us to trample death under our feet: after which he will *cast it into the lake of fire*, and the mouth of the bottomless pit shall be shut upon it for ever,

Rev. xx. Then shall be fully accomplished this glorious prophecy, *Death is swallowed up in victory*, 1 Cor. xv. 54; for the spirit of God assures us, in express terms, *That there shall be no more death*, Rev. xxi. 4.

From what hath been said, we may easily understand what is become of this threefold cord, twisted by the devil, with a design to strangle all mankind. The Son of God hath cut in pieces the first of these unhappy bands with the sharp sword of his almighty power. By the spirit of sanctification, he loosens and wears away the second by degrees; and by the last he draws us to himself, and then he burns and consumes them altogether. Therefore we have no occasion to fear an eternal death, nor to tremble when hell opens its enormous jaws. *If we resist the devil, he will flee from us*, James iv. 7., and we shall some day *bruise him under our feet*, Rom. xvi. 20. It is true, the consequences of the spiritual death make us sigh and groan bitterly, while our souls remain in this sinful flesh; for though we are risen from the tombs of our sins, yet we bear about with us the grave-clothes of our corruption. But we have this consideration to comfort us, that Jesus Christ will shortly give the same order from heaven concerning us, as he did in the case of Lazarus, *Loose him, and let him go*, John. xi. 44; when instead of these rags of corruption which at present disgrace us, he will clothe us with light and glory, and immortality, and perfect happiness. As to the natural death, we can truly say, that all its bitterness is over, and that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ hath delivered us from all its terrors. Nay, in my opinion, it is talking too coldly to say that we no longer fear it, and that we expect it with courage: for if we are really Christians, and of the number of God's children, we shall hope for and desire it, and hasten its arrival, by our sighs and most passionate wishes.

What I have taken notice of in this chapter, might suffice to furnish any Christian soul with ample comforts and consolations against the fears of death. But as one who goes to buy stuffs in a shop, when he cheapens such as are of small value, he only casts his eye slightly upon the piece, or just looks upon some small pattern; but when he is about to purchase a rich tapestry of great price, he desires to see every part of it, one after another, to view it at leisure, and consider all its beauties: so I judge that the pious and sagacious reader will desire; now I have discovered to him in gross this treasury of *Consolations against the Fears of Death*, that I should in the next place, reveal its hidden excellencies,

produce every part of them by degrees to his contemplation, and with my pen remark to him all its most exquisite beauties.

CHAPTER VI.

Whence proceed the Fears of Death.

As a wise and skilful physician carefully examines the causes of the disease before he prescribes a remedy ; and as an experienced surgeon scratches the wound before he pours in the balsam ; so I think it highly necessary to examine, with care and exactness, whence the Fears of Death proceed, before we begin to apply those consolations with which we hope to fortify the Christian soul, for when we shall once understand the causes and nature of the disease, we shall, without difficulty, be able to assign the proper remedies. When we shall have scratched and washed the wound, we will, with God's assistance, pour into it the true balm of Gilead.

In the first place, we think too seldom upon death, and meditate too little upon the misery and frailty of our poor decaying nature. We confess indeed with our lips, that our life is but a breath in our nostrils, a vapour that soon passes away, a shadow that quickly vanishes ; but we flatter ourselves at the bottom of our hearts, and, with Herod, take a pleasure that men should look upon us as so many little gods, Acts xii. Because death approaches us, having its feet shod with wool, and without noise, we foolishly imagine, that it will never come near us: like that wicked servant mentioned in the gospel, who, because the Lord delayed his coming, concluded that he would not come at all, Matt. xxiv. We suffer ourselves to be deluded by the flattering suggestions of our own corrupted flesh, and by the deceitful insinuations of the old serpent, that whispers to us, as to our first parents, *Ye shall not die*, Gen. iii. 4.

2. We all say, that Death is inexorable, and that it is deaf, and hath no ears ; nevertheless we live, for the most part, as if we had made a covenant with death, and were at agreement with the grave, Isa. xxviii.; as if we were well assured, that death was afar off, and that it would not come of a long

season. We trust in our youth, our vigour and our health, and persuade ourselves that we shall see all our acquaintance go before us, and when we follow them it would be at a great distance. We have in abhorrence every thing that represents death unto us, or calls it to our remembrance; and if at any time its image comes in our way, we turn from it our eyes, and banish it from our thoughts, as a hideous dream, and a deceitful illusion. Death seizes upon us before we have so much as seriously reflected that we are mortal; therefore we tremble with horror, and are dismayed at the approaches of Death; and are become like the Israelites, who trembled and fled before the face of the giant Goliah, because they were not accustomed to behold him.

3. We lay too much stress upon second causes; we look upon death as accidental, as a thing that happens by chance, and confine our considerations to the means that produce it; whereas we should be fully persuaded, that God hath not only determined and appointed death itself, but also all the causes and means which usually attend it. Hence we are perplexed and disquieted with a thousand vain and useless anxieties, and even tempted to murmur and repine against God. We curse the dart that pierces us, instead of adoring, in all humility, the hand from whence it came. In a word, whenever death comes upon us, we are ready to say to it, as the devils did to our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, *Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?* Matt. viii. 29.

4. We are too deeply rooted here below; we are so fastened and attached to this world, that we would willingly abide here for ever, and cannot bear the thought that death will remove us. Our lusts have no bounds, and we often kill ourselves in pursuing the most worthless vanities. When we draw near the end of our mortal race, and our voyage of life is almost finished, we are the most solicitous to make large provisions of worldly vanities. We build stately houses and magnificent palaces when we should think of nothing but of building our tomb, and preparing our winding sheet. In short, we have so strong a passion for all the things of this life, that to separate us from them, is to pull out our hearts, and to tear in pieces our bowels. When death approaches our pillow, and offers to pull us from it, we are ready to say with the sluggard mentioned in the book of Proverbs, *Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep*, ch. vi. 10. When our heavenly bridegroom knocks at the gate, we cannot persuade ourselves

to leave our repose, any more than the spouse spoken of in the Canticles, ch. v. What, says the worldling, must I for ever abandon my sumptuous palaces, my houses of pleasure, and my magnificent gardens? Must I leave this fine tapestry; these costly moveables, and all these rare and precious ornaments, with which my halls, my chambers, and my closets are enriched? Must this cruel death degrade me so soon from all my offices and honours, and deprive me of the enjoyment of all these possessions and treasures? Must it snatch me in a moment from all my pleasures and delights? Must I be torn from the embraces of my beloved wife, the sight of my dear children, and the sweet society of my friends? And must I for ever renounce the flattering services of my domestics? When we are in this wretched, unprepared state, it is no wonder if death seems terrible to us, and if it causes us to feel all the sharpness of its sting. For as, when Absalom was hanged by the hair of the head on an oak in the forest, Joab took three darts, and thrust them through his heart, 2 Sam. xviii; so, when our affections are too much entangled with the world, and with vain expectations of earthly contentment, we are exposed, in the most miserable manner, to all the darts and violences of death.

5. Another principal cause of the fear of death, is, a sinful life. We abandon ourselves to all the vice and debauchery of a dissolute age. We suffer ourselves to be seduced by bad company, and carried away by a torrent of pernicious customs. It is therefore no wonder if death appears terrible to us, because it comes against us armed with our own sins, and has for its harbingers the stings of our own consciences. Whence do ye think, proceeded that horrible dismay which seized upon king Belshazzar, when he saw the hand writing upon the wall of his palace? Dan. v. It was because he had profaned the holy vessels of God's house, and was rioting in the company of lascivious women. Why did Felix tremble, when he heard St Paul reason of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come? Acts xxiv. It was because he was a wicked man, given over to all manner of uncleanness and unjust living. Thus, because we profane the members of our body, which are, as it were, the vessels of God's sanctuary, and because our lives are wicked and disorderly, we cannot endure to hear the mention of death; and when it comes upon us, we are ready to say to it, as Felix did to St Paul, *Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.* The love

of sin and the fear of death are like two sisters, who hold one another by the hand; or rather they are twins, that are born and die together. As the prophet Amos said to the Israelites of old, *You put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near*, Amos vi. 3. So we may say to the greatest part of the men of this age: you put as far from you as possibly you can, the day of death, and cause to come near unto you all manner of uncleanness, covetousness, ambition, pride, vanity, usury, rapine, violence, envy, hatred, and such like plagues of the soul. You not only cause these abominable vices to come near unto you; but, what is worse, you root them in your hearts, and foster them in your bowels. Certainly we may very well apply to all vicious and profane people, what the prophet Jeremiah said heretofore of the city of Jerusalem, *Her filthiness is in her skirts, she remembereth not her last end*, Lam. i. 9.

6. I have also remarked another defect; and that is, we distrust the providence of God, and know not how to place our confidence in his Fatherly care; we have too good an opinion of ourselves, and of our own abilities; we cannot resolve to die, because we fancy ourselves to be of very great importance to the world, and that our death would make an irreparable breach in the church of God, the state, or our family.

7. Because the soul and body are joined together in so strict a union, we cannot imagine how they can be separated without the greatest and most exquisite pains. Nay, so great is our infidelity, that we cannot rely upon the promise which God hath given, *That he will succour us in our distress, and deliver us from all our troubles.* Jacob's ladder that reaches up to the heaven may ravish us with admiration; but it seems very difficult to ascend. Paradise is rich, glorious, and abounds with the sweetest delights; but the gate to it is strait, and all choked up with thorns.

8. I also conclude, that one of the chief reasons why we fear death, is, because we look upon God as a most severe judge, inflamed with anger and indignation, and armed with vengeance against us: whereas we should consider him as a merciful Father, full of the bowels of compassion and kindness. Every slave trembles at the sight of his lord; and there is no malefactor but is afraid when he appears before his judge, to be examined upon the rack. Then how can I, who am polluted with sin, and blackened with crimes, appear before that glorious throne, before which the seraphims cover their faces with their wings? Isa. vi. How shall I,

that am but stubble, be able to endure the presence of that great avenging God, *who is a consuming fire*, Heb. xii. 29.

9. Another visible defect is, we do not embrace with a true and lively faith, the death and passion of our Lord and Saviour. We all talk of Jesus Christ crucified ; but we do not comprehend the divine virtue of his passion, nor feel its efficacy. We do not consider that his death hath rent asunder the veil that kept us from the heavenly sanctuary, and that his blood hath marked out for us the way to paradise, and procured us an entrance into it.

10. To avoid the horror which thinking on the grave is apt to give us, we do not reflect, as we ought, that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ hath himself lain in the grave, and that he hath sanctified it with his holy and divine presence. We do not engrave upon our minds, that it is just and reasonable that we should be conformable to Christ in his abasement, if we will have any part with him in his glory and exaltation.

11. Another cause, which nourishes in our souls the fear of death, is this, we look upon it as if it was in its full strength and vigour ; whereas we should remember, that Jesus Christ hath overcome and disarmed it by his resurrection, and that we have nothing to do but to follow the glorious track of his victorious wheels, and fasten that furious beast to his triumphant chariot.

12. We do not consider enough, with a serious and religious attention, that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is not only risen from the grave victorious and triumphant, but that he is also ascended into the highest heavens, as our forerunner, to prepare a place for us ; and that by departing out of our miserable bodies, we follow the footsteps of our glorious Redeemer, to go and reap with him, the immortal fruits of his ineffable victories.

13. We confine ourselves too much to the contemplation of our frail, corrupt and mortal nature ; and we seldom enter into this most necessary meditation, that by the Holy Spirit we are nearly and inseparably united to Jesus Christ, the Prince of Life, and the Fountain of Light; and that we have already in us the seeds of blessedness, of glory and immortality.

14. As the children of Israel murmured in the desert against Moses, and longed to be again in Egypt, forgetting the bitter slavery under which they had groaned, their making of bricks, and the heat of the furnaces ; and minding only the pleasures which they had lost, they dreamed of nothing

but the abundance of bread, the flesh-pots, cucumbers, onions, and other dainties with which they had so often satisfied their hunger: so we repine at death because we do not reflect upon the evils from which it delivers us; we only think upon the vain delights and seeming advantages of which it deprives us.

15. We foolishly imagine that death destroys and reduces us to nothing; and do not consider, that, without touching our essential part, it only takes from us sin, in which we were entangled, and breaks the rest of the chains of our spiritual bondage; so that death is rather the death of sin, than of the faithful.

16. Another great error in us is, we do not lift up our minds to contemplate the glory prepared for us as soon as our souls shall have left our languishing bodies.—Whatever face we may set upon the matter, we do not heartily believe in the felicities which God hath promised to all those that shall come into his presence. Sometimes, indeed, we think upon the joys of paradise; but then it is a transient thought, that quickly passes through our souls, and takes no root; insomuch, that many, if mere shame did not restrain them, would be apt to cry out with the emperor Adrian, "My dearest soul, my little darling, the guest and companion of my body, whither art thou going?"

17. Add to this, that we fix our attention, and dwell too much upon the rottenness and corruption that threatens the body; whereas we should, by faith, extend our views to the glorious resurrection that shall soon follow. Charming abode, the delightful host of my soul, must death snatch me from thee with so much violence? Must I part from thy loved and sweet society? Must I leave thee upon such hard and lamentable terms? That of so many honours which have been heaped upon thee, not so much as the shadow shall follow thee to the grave? That of all thy rich furniture and treasures, thou shalt bear away nothing but a winding sheet, a few boards, or at the most, some pounds of lead. After thou hast been clothed with so much magnificence, must thy covering at last be the worms? After thou hast lived so proudly in palaces gilded with gold, and perfumed with the sweetest odours, must thy abode be at last a stinking and loathsome sepulchre? Must these beautiful eyes lose their lustre? These coral lips become pale? This golden mouth be stopped? And must this flesh, sustained with so much delicacy, rot, and become an abhorrence in the eyes of the world?

18. In the last place, we do not meditate as we ought,

upon that fulness of bliss and glory which is prepared for us from the foundation of the world, and of which we shall have the full and perfect enjoyment, when Christ Jesus shall come from heaven, with his holy angels, to judge the quick and the dead. He shall then re-unite our souls and bodies, for all eternity, "That he may be glorified in his saints, and his wonders made manifest in all the faithful."

CHAPTER VII.

The first remedy against the Fears of Death, is, to meditate often upon it.

The most dreadful things are made familiar to us by custom. Soldiers who are raw and unexperienced, commonly tremble at the sight of the enemy, turn pale at the noise of the muskets, and fall to the ground half dead at the roaring of the cannon; but when their courage hath been once hardened by a long exercise, they will march to seek the enemy, even up to his intrenchment, and will go to the battle with as much gaiety as to a feast or a triumph. Neither the tempestuous vollies of the small shot, nor the thunder and lightning of the ordnance, can make them wink their eyes, or cover their heads, and they themselves laugh at their former apprehensions. So the first notions of death commonly scare and terrify us; but when we have seriously meditated upon it, and take a nearer view of it, we not only cease to fear it, but boldly march up to its very intrenchments, and with an undaunted countenance behold it launch all its thunders, and let fly all its arrows. As they who are not accustomed to the sight of savage beasts dare not go near them, and can hardly look upon them without horror; but such as are used to live with, and caress them, can touch them without apprehension, and freely play with them: so they who never had the confidence to look death in the face, tremble, and are dismayed, as soon as they see it approach; but they who often meditate upon it, make it familiar to them, and can, without fear, put their hands into its mouth. Moses fled from before his rod, the first time it was turned into a serpent; but when he had taken courage to lay hold of it, and

saw that it returned to its former shape, he was so far from flying from before it, or being afraid of it, that he employed it to a very happy use, and, by God's command, wrought with it many miracles. Thus it is with death, it frightens us at first; but if we once lay hold of it with the hands of a true and lively faith, it will be so far from frightening us, that it will discover to us a new world of most excellent wonders.

Death therefore, is so far from terrifying such as have made it familiar to them, that it fills them full of joy and comfort. As a child that looks upon his father, who is masked, is frightened, and begins to cry, but if he hath but the courage to pull off the vizard, and sees the loved countenance of his parent hid under that deformity, he not only ceases from weeping, and puts away his fears, but also leaps for joy, and embraces him: so, if we look with a timorous eye upon death's outward visage only, we are struck with horror at its hideous appearance; but if we take but the courage to lift up the deceitful vizard, we shall soon discover our heavenly Father, and leap with tears of joy to embrace him. As the apostles, when they saw at a distance, and in the night, Jesus Christ walking upon the sea, cried out for fear, supposing it had been a spirit; but when he drew nigh to them, and they heard his voice, they perceived him to be their Lord and Saviour; and having received him into their ship, the tempest immediately ceased.—Thus if we look upon death at a distance, the blindness and ignorance with which we are surrounded will represent it to us as a frightful spirit; but if we take a nearer view of it, by the light of the gospel, we shall find it to be our salvation and our deliverance that approaches. All our fears will then be hushed, and our souls will return to our former calmness. In a word, as he that flies before his enemy increases his courage, and makes him the more eager and resolved in the pursuit; so, when death sees us tremble and turn pale at its approach, it becomes the more insolent, and makes the more haste to devour us.

We must therefore think betimes of death, meditate upon it without ceasing, and make it familiar to us. This was holy Job's practice, *I have said to corruption, Thou art my father: To the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister*, ch. xvii. 14. I am of opinion that this was also one of the principal reasons why Philip, king of Macedon, commanded one of his pages to cry aloud to him every morning, at his first awaking, *Remember, O King, that thou art a man!* For by this often repeated lesson, he not only endeavoured to subdue his mind to humility, and to teach his frail

nature not to grow proud of a sceptre, or abuse its power, but he likewise proposed, by this means, to make death familiar to him, that he might not be surprised or dismayed when it made its approaches. This was also, without doubt, the design of the emperor Mervan, or Mervanes, when he caused this motto to be engraved on his seal, *Remember that thou must die!* What his courtiers were afraid to tell him, these few words put him in mind of every moment; and this great prince could never put his seal to a warrant for the execution of any man, but at the same time he represented to himself that his own death was inevitable. For the same reason, the chief men among the Chinese are used to keep their coffins ready made in their chambers, that, at every moment, they may look death in the face. And with the same view, the Egyptians, in their most splendid entertainments, always placed a dead man's skull upon the sideboard; intending, by this spectacle, not only to teach their guests to moderate their joys, and restrain their unruly appetites, but also to bring them acquainted with, and to accustom them to behold death in the midst of all their delights, as if they had invited it to their feast, that they might rejoice together with it. I conceive it to have been for the same cause, that the Jews built their sepulchres in their gardens, that they might have the image of death continually before their eyes; and that, in the midst of all their recreations, it might be their most pleasing and ordinary entertainment.

But for us who are Christians, to oblige us to think upon death, there is no need that a page should remind us every morning that we are mortal; or that the motto of a seal should put us in mind that we must die; or that a coffin should be placed in our chambers, there being many times more ostentation than true piety in such proceedings; nor is it necessary that a dead man's scull should be set before our eyes, or that a sepulchre should be hewn in our gardens. For as Alexander the Great knew himself to be mortal by the blood that flowed from his wounds; so the diseases to which we are subjected, and the hourly infirmities that we feel, sufficiently assure us, that we are in a frail and mortal state. As a celebrated philosopher, when he received the news of his only son's untimely death, answered the messenger with a settled countenance, *I knew that I begot him a mortal man;* so will the faithful say, without change of countenance, or the least sign of fear, I know that my mother conceived me a mortal man; I know that death is the tribute

we must all pay to nature ; and that it was upon this condition that I came into the world.

If we will make use of any exterior helps, to engrave this lesson still more deeply on our minds, we must, in the first place, carefully practise the advice of the wise man, "It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting ; for that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to his heart," Eccles. ch. vii. 2. Never look upon a sick person breathing his last, or upon a dead corpse in its coffin, but remember that this is a universal law unto which all mankind are subject ; that it is the express image of thy own future condition.

I am also of opinion, that to make our last will, betimes, and to read it over frequently, may prove a very good and successful expedient, to reconcile to our minds the habitual thoughts of death ; for as, when we meditate upon a farewell that we are going to take of our friends, we feel in our souls the very same emotions that happen to us at the moment of our separation ; so, when we seriously meditate upon the last farewell, that we shall bid to this world, death seems already upon our lips ; or rather, we think ourselves already in the embraces of Jesus Christ, our ever blessed Redeemer.

Besides these things, which may be called extraordinary, I find nothing, either within or without us, nothing that we see, feel, taste or smell, in short, nothing that passeth in our private or public conversation, which is not capable of recalling into our minds the consideration of death.

The flesh that thou eatest, the wool wherewith thou art clothed, the silk that adorns thee, and, in general, most of thy garments and ornaments, are the spoils of dead animals. The sight, therefore, of these, and all others of the same kind, should call to the remembrance thy frail and mortal state, and cause thee to meditate upon the preacher's saying, *For that which befalleth beasts, befalleth the sons of men, even one thing befalleth them ; as the one dieth, so dieth the other ; yea, they have all one breath, so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast ; for all is vanity : all go unto one place, all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again,* Eccles. iii. 19, 20.

Never put off thy clothes, but remember that thou must shortly put off this miserable body ; and when thou liest down in thy bed, think of the coffin in which thou must one day be stretched out. If thou art awake during the darkness of the night, consider that death will shortly come, and put out the taper of thy life.—Let thy sleep be the image of

thy death ; and let it not fail to remind thee, that the time is drawing near, when thou must sleep in a bed of dust. When thou awakest think upon the delightful sound of the archangel's trumpet, that shall awaken thee from the sleep of death.—Say within thyself, when thou arisest, perhaps I may never rise again till the Son of God shall come from heaven, and reach out his almighty arm to lift me from the grave. And when thou seest the rising sun, perhaps I may never again behold the rising of any sun, but the Son of Righteousness, with healing in his wings. Think as thou dressest, that the time is coming, when thou shalt assume a much more magnificent habit, and put on a robe of light and immortality. When thou sittest down to table, say to thyself, perhaps the hour is drawing near, in which death will feed upon my carcass: perhaps I shall never again sit down to table, till I sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and with the blessed martyrs, who have washed and whitened their robes in the blood of the Lamb ; perhaps I may never eat again, till I eat the bread of angels, and of the fruit of the tree of life ; nor ever drink more, till I drink of the new wine in the kingdom of heaven, and of the waters of the river of eternal joys, that flow from the throne of God, and of the Lamb. Every time thou goest out of thy house, or changest thy habitation, reflect with thyself, that in a little time thou must depart out of this mortal tabernacle. Art thou alone, and separated from all human society ? Remember that in a few days death will separate and divide thee from thyself. Art thou going into any company, or into the holy assemblies ? Say in thy heart, perhaps I may never go again into any company, till I come to the congregration of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven. Art thou invited to the marriage-feast of any friend ? Say unto thy soul, perhaps I may never go to any other feast, till I go to the marriage-feast of the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world. Art thou viewing any rich and magnificent palace, or any garden of pleasure ? Say to thyself, perhaps I shall never see any other palace till I enter into the palace of the living God ; nor any other pleasant garden, till I come to the celestial paradise.

When thou casteth thine eyes downward, and beholdest the earth upon which thou treadest, consider with thyself at the same time, that this earth, or some other like it, shall afford thee a grave, and that thou shalt sleep there the sleep of death. Think upon what God said to Adam, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return," Gen. iii. 19 ; and say

with the holy man Job, "Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay, and thou wilt bring me into dust again," Job x. 9. "I go down into the dust; and if thou seekest for me in the morning I shall not be found," Job vii. 21.

If thou takest a view of the plants, the herbs and the flowers, let it not be without meditating upon what the Holy Spirit speaks concerning our life, in the 90th Psalm, That man *is like the grass which groweth up, in the morning it flourisheth and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down and withereth.* And in the 103d Psalm, *As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more.* And elsewhere, *All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man, as the flower of the field,* Isa. xl.; 1 Pet. i. If thou lookest upon the brooks, the rivers, and falls of water, remember, at the same time, what thou readest in the 14th chapter of the second book of Samuel, *For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again.* And in the 90th Psalm, *Thou carriest them away as with a flood.*

If thou takest notice of the shadow upon a dial, that follows the swift motion of the sun, or of the shadows which bodies cast upon the earth, in the evening they lengthen themselves, and a little after vanish: place before thine eyes, and engrave upon thy heart this excellent sentence, *Man is like to vanity; his days are as a shadow that passeth away,* Psal. cxliv. 4; and say with David, *I am gone like the shadow, when it declineth,* Psal. cix. 23.

When thou hearest the whistling of the winds, which God bringeth forth out of his treasures, lift up thy soul unto thy Creator, and say unto him with Job, *O remember that my life is wind: mine eyes shall no more see good,* chap. vii. 7; that is, the imaginary good of this transitory world. And again, *Thou liftest me up to the wind; thou causest me to ride upon it, and dissolvest my substance,* chap. xxx. 22.

If thou takest a pleasure in seeing the birds that fly in the open firmament of heaven, revolve in thy mind this beautiful simile, *My days passeth away as an eagle that hasteth to the prey,* Job ix. 26.

When thou beholdest the rich beauty of the heavens, and the sparkling lustre of the stars, consider with thyself that thou hast a gracious God, who hath formed thee after his own image, not to grovel always in the filth of this miserable earth, but to dwell eternally in the heavens, and that at the end of

thy mortal course, he will lift thee up on high into the palace of his glory, where thou shalt shine forth as the stars in the firmament, and as the sun shineth in his strength.

If thou thinkest upon the revolution of the seasons, remember that the spring of thine infancy, the hot summer of thy youth, the autumn of thy maturity, and the lowering winter of thy cold and decrepit age, shall succeed one another in the same order.

Let him who travels by land think upon Job's complaint, *My days are swifter than a post; they flee away, they see no good,* Job ix. 25; and meditate upon these excellent words of the apostle St Paul, *This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,* Phil. iii. 13, 14.

Let him who sails upon the sea represent to himself that this world is like a great sea, swelling with tempestuous waves, our life like a dangerous voyage; *that our days pass away as the swift ships,* Job ix. 26; and that at last the wind of death will drive us into the port of eternal felicity, the haven of immortal glory.

Hath God given us children? Let us understand that it is to remind us of our mortality: for they come to take our place, and succeed to our estate. Doth God take them from us into his holy rest, even those we love the most tenderly? Let us imprint upon our minds, that God casts up the roots that bind us to the earth, that he might lift up our hearts and affections to himself. Instead of bursting into a flood of tears, and abandoning ourselves to a useless and immoderate sorrow, let us comfort ourselves with this reflection, that one part of us is already entered into heaven, and that the other will shortly follow. Let us say with David, "We shall go to them, but they shall not return to us," 2 Sam. xii. 23.

Let the rich man who counts over his treasures remember, that God hath counted and numbered his days; let these words continually resound in his ears, "Give an account of thy stewardship," Luke xvi. 2.

Let the magistrate, every time he delivers his opinion, or pronounces a sentence, arm himself with this consideration; that he who judges here below, shall be judged himself above; that he must one day appear, as a poor criminal, at the tribunal of God; that the books will be opened, and that the great judge of the world will examine into every particular of his conduct; that he must give an account, not only

of his words and actions, but also of his most secret thoughts; and that, without examination by the rack, God will discover the very inmost recesses of his soul.

Let the gentleman, whenever he receives his rents and revenues, place before his eyes the tribute which he must pay to the earth. Let the prince or nobleman, when he examines his charters and ancient patents, and reckons up the services and homages due to his house, remember that he himself must shortly go in person to the gates of heaven, to pay his homage to the divinity. Let the king, when he sits upon his throne of justice, call to mind the throne of the King of Kings, before which he must make his appearance, as well as the meanest and most despicable of his subjects; and that he must be accountable to a just God, who is no respecter of persons.

Let the minister never be employed in the care of his flock, but let him sigh and long for the happy day in which, "the Lamb shall feed him in person, and lead him to the living fountains of water," Rev. vii. 17.

Let the Christian soldier engrave upon his sword this sentence of Job, "Is there not, as it were, a warfare appointed to man upon earth?" Job vii. 1; and instead of thirsting to shed the blood of his fellow creatures, prepare to encounter death itself.

Let the husbandman, whenever he sows his seed, or reaps the corn off his fields, be mindful of the season that draws near, in which his body must rot in the earth, that it may spring up to eternal life. Let him remember what the apostle says, "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die," 1 Cor. xv. 36; and meditate upon the comfortable words of the Psalmist, "They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy," Psal. cxxvi.

Let the handicraftsman, who works in his shop, engrave in the bottom of his heart this excellent sentence, "Our days are like the days of a hireling," Job vii. 1; and when he hath ended his task, and is going to rest, let him comfort himself with this assurance, that when he shall have finished the work which God hath given him to do, he shall have rest from all his labours.

Whenever the physician visits his patient, or whenever the surgeon dresses a wound, let them remember, that they have no secret that can preserve them from death, or that can cure the wounds that it makes in our corruptible nature.

Let the most skilful lawyers, the most able counsellors imprint upon their minds, that all their subtilties and rheto-

ric will never obtain for them their suit against death, nor procure for them a moment of delay.

And let the greatest philosophers learn, "That the soundest philosophy is the meditation of death."

In short, of whatever age or condition we be, let us lift up our hands and hearts, without ceasing unto God, and say unto him with the royal Psalmist, "Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am," Psal. xxxix. 4; and with the prophet Moses, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom," Psal. xc. 12.

I.

Prayer and Meditation upon the subject of our Mortality.

O My God, and heavenly Father, since it hath pleased Thee that I should be born of a mortal and perishable nature, and that this poor body should return to the dust from whence it came, grant me grace to be always mindful of my frail condition. Let the revolutions of time, which consumes all things, the variety of the seasons, the inconstancy of the world, and all the various changes which I observe upon the face of the earth; make me remember the great change which I myself must undergo. Let me consider my natural infirmities, and the frequent maladies that attend me, as so many messengers sent to warn me, that I must shortly leave this earthly tabernacle. Let the bed upon which I lie, put me in mind, that when I have finished my days of labour here, my body shall rest in a bed of dust. When I put off my garments, let me recollect, that in a few days I must put off this mortal and corruptible body. Let me consider the sleep that locks up my senses, as a representative of death, which shall entirely put a stop to all the animal functions of this life; and let me look upon the coffins and sepulchres of my relations and friends, as a lively image of the house which I must shortly go to inhabit. O Lord, grant me thy grace, so often to look upon death and the grave, that they may no longer terrify and affright me. Let me so much accustom myself to meditate upon them, that the thoughts of them may become familiar and pleasing to me, and instead of afflicting, comfort and rejoice me. I am born to die; but I shall die to live eternally with God, who alone, is the author of my life, the fountain of my happiness. *Amen.*

CHAPTER VIII.

The second remedy against the Fears of Death, is, to live under a continual expectation of it.

It is not sufficient to think often upon death, and to make fine harangues upon it. There are a great many persons who talk of it perpetually, with all the eloquence imaginable, and yet cannot boast of being exempt from its terrors. They are always ready to discourse upon Death; but their hearts are never disposed to expect it. They know very well that Death will seize upon them; but they are foolish enough to believe it will not be of a long time. They acknowledge that they are indebted to God and nature; but they put off the payment of the debt from day to day, as if they could corrupt the sergeants of Death, and obtain a further respite at pleasure. There is not any man so old, so feeble and decrepit, but flatters himself, that he has, at least, another year to live; nay, the very last, we fancy we perceive death at a vast distance; and that we may prepare at our leisure to receive it as we ought: whence it comes to pass, that at whatever time, or in whatever place, death comes to take us out of the world, it surprises and astonishes us.

To remedy this evil, we should always have in our thoughts, not only that we are mortal, but also that our lives are short, and of small duration; we must continually say with Job, *Are not my days few?* ch. x. 20; and imprint upon our minds this sentence of David, "The Lord hath made my days as a hand-breadth, and mine age is as nothing before him," Psal. xxxix. 5; and this divine saying of Moses, "The best of our days are labour and sorrow; they are soon cut off, and we fly away," Psal. xc. 10.

The ancients painted time with wings, an emblem very expressive of its incredible swiftness; and the Holy Spirit compares our life to a weaver's shuttle, a hired servant, a post that runs apace, a swift ship, and an eagle that hasteneth to the prey. It speaks of it as of a flood of waters, a cloud, a vapour, a wind, and a breath. It tells us, that our days fade away as a dream, that they fly like a shadow, vanish as a word in the air, and perish as a thought. In a word, all

the lightest and most inconstant things in the world, and those whose motions are the most sudden and rapid, are employed in the holy scriptures, to represent to us the vanity of our life, and the shortness of our days.

But the short continuance of our life is not all; it likewise slides away insensibly. It is like a clock, the wheels of which move without ceasing, although the hand seems to us to stand still; or like a plant that grows continually, although the motion of its growth cannot be discerned. As a man who is on board a ship under sail, goes forward, let him employ himself as he will; so whether we wake or sleep, walk or sit, eat or fast, labour or take our rest, we still advance insensibly towards the grave. Our body is like a tree, continually devoured by two worms; for day and night prey upon it without intermission. In vain you banish out of your minds the thoughts of death; although you forget it, it will not forget you; the more you fly from it, the more it follows and pursues you; and when you imagine it the farthest off, you have often hold of it.

As a cancer that infects the breast, eats it away perpetually, so time never ceases to consume us. The very food that nourishes us, brings us by degrees, into the embraces of death; as the oil that causes a lamp to burn brings it to its end. As, when a torch is lighted, it begins to decay the moment it begins to burn; so I may truly say, without being thought to exaggerate, that the first moment of this animal and corporal life, is also the first moment of our death; for the natural heat that is in us, which is our principle of life, is also the principle of our death, by means of its continual acting upon the radical moisture, which it never ceases to consume, as the flame never ceases to consume the wax of the torch. So that we have within ourselves the cause of our corruption, and the decay of our life. And as we are used to say to all sublunary bodies, that the generation of one is the destruction of another; so it is with time: the birth of an hour, a day, a week, a month or a year, is the death of that which went before. It is like a wheel that mounts, to no other end but to fall down again.

Since, therefore, our life, properly speaking, is nothing else but a continual death, we express ourselves amiss, to call that only the hour of death, in which the soul is separated from the body. For as when many cannon shot are discharged against a strong castle, we by no means say, that it was the last shot only that opened the breach; or as when a hard stone is cut with a chisel and hammer, or insensibly

hollowed and worn away by water, we give not the glory of the performance to the last blow that was struck, or the last drop that distilled ; so when the bodies decay and fall into rottenness, we must not consider alone the last assaults of death. As in a ladder, when we go up or down it, we take notice of every round, from the top to the bottom ; or as in an hour-glass we look at every grain of sand that passes ; as in a journey we reckon the first mile as well as the last ; and in a race consider the moment we set out as well as that in which we come in ; so we should reckon the hour of our death from the first moment that we drew in our breath, to the last wherein we give up the ghost.

Besides, what happens of course to this poor miserable body, there are an infinite number of strange and unexpected accidents which interrupt and shorten its race. The taper is not always burnt out by its own flame ; many contrary blasts and unkind showers extinguish it. If our life is short, it is no less frail and uncertain. The body in which we languish during this life, is like Jonah's gourd, chapter iv. ; for if it be but touched by an unwholesome wind, or smote by a worm, it presently withers and dies away. This was the opinion of Eliphaz, when he said, "We dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust ; we are crushed before the moth," Job. iv. 19.

When God intends to destroy mankind in his anger, and tread them in the wine-press of his fury, he does not always make use of the ministry of angels, as he did when he smote all the first-born of Egypt, Exod. xii. 29 ; when he stretched forth his hand to destroy Jerusalem, 2 Sam. xxiv. 16 ; and slew in one night one hundred fourscore and five thousand men of the army of Sennacherib, 2 Kings xix. 35. He does not always let loose the wicked spirits, as when he gave them permission to raise a furious tempest, which blew down to the ground the house where Job's children were met together, and buried them under its ruins, Job i. 19. He opens not always the flood-gates of heaven, as when he drowned the world of the ungodly in the waters of the deluge, Gen. vii. He causeth not always fire and brimstone to rain from heaven, as he did upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and upon Admah and Zeboim, Gen. xix. ; Deut. xxix. He does not always work wonders in the deep, as when he destroyed Pharaoh and the Egyptians in the waters of the Red Sea, Exod. xiv. 28. He prepares not always the whales to swallow us up, as he did in the case of Jonah, ch. i. 17. He sends not always fiery serpents, as he did to the children of

Israel, who murmured in the desert, Numb. xxi. 6. He commands not always the earth to open her mouth, as he did when it swallowed up Corah, Dathan and Abiram, Numb. xvi. 32. He does not always cast down great stones from heaven, as when he smote the Amorites, Josh. x. 11. He does not always devour us by flames that come out from his presence, as he did Nadab and Abihu, who offered strange fire before him, Levit. x. 2. He commands not always the lions and bears of the forest to issue forth, as he did when the rebellious prophet was slain, 1 Kings xiii. 24; and when the ill-tutored children of Bethel, who mocked Elisha, were torn to pieces, 2 Kings ii. 24. He does not always employ the plagues of judgments, of pestilence, war and famine; the stinking snuff of a lamp, or the unpleasant vapour of any malignant smoke, is able to suffocate and kill us in a moment. A little fly, the kernel of an apple, a hair, a grape stone, a grain of sand or any other, the smallest atom, is sufficient to stop our breath, and put an end to our life; therefore God adviseth us by his prophet Isaiah, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?" Isa. ii. 22.

What is still more seriously to be considered, these accidents happen at all times and in all places. Death lays his snares for us every where, as well in the midst of our relations, and in the embraces of our dearest friends, as in the midst of our most mortal and irreconcileable enemies. Its visible darts fly on every side; and as the Psalmist finely expresses it, *The pestilence walketh in darkness, and destruction wasteth at noon-day*, Psal. xci. 6. Death is as busy on the most solemn festivals, as on working days; it pulls us from the table where we are taking our delights, with as much ease as from the bed of sorrow, where we sigh and groan.—There is no place, though ever so sacred, that can afford us an asylum; it hath no more respect for the churches dedicated to God's service than for ordinary houses. All the riches of Peru, and all the power of the greatest monarchs, cannot protect us from its pursuit. The debt it demands of us, must be paid at sight; and it is not possible for us to appear by deputy to the summons it sends us.

Death does not fix his citations upon the door, nor give them into the hand of a servant. There is not one of them upon which it cannot write, as a proof of its having been served, *speaking to him in person.* It surprises us in the house, and in the fields; in our closets and in the streets; on our couch and in our chair; in the midst of our feasts and all

our pomp. It attacks the greatest kings in their most magnificent palaces, their most flourishing cities, and their best fortified castles, in the midst of their most faithful subjects and most victorious armies; upon their thrones and in their triumphant chariots. As king Ahab, when he went down to take possession of Naboth's vineyard, met unexpectedly with the prophet Elijah, to whom he said in great wrath, *Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?* 1 Kings xxi. 20; so the proud men of this world, when they think of nothing but the pleasant employment of their unjust acquisitions, and of bathing themselves in the blood and sweat of the poor, often meet with death unexpectedly, which they curse in their hearts; and if it did not stop their mouths, and set their venomous teeth, they would also say to it in a fury, *Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?*

It was this pious reflection that caused the wisest king that ever lived upon the earth, to cry out, "For man knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them," Eccles. ix. 12; and this it was that indicted this excellent sentence in the book of Job, "In a moment they shall die, and the people shall be troubled at midnight, and pass away: and the mighty shall be taken away without hand," ch. xxxiv. 20; that is to say, that to destroy kingdoms, and whole nations, and carry off the most robust and mighty amongst men, Death has no occasion for any other force than that of his own arm.

Remember, then, O young man, *thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them*, Eccles. xii. 1. Though thou art the strongest and most vigorous amongst men, yet trust not in thy strength, nor confide in thy vigour. Think upon the iron and the brass in the image of king Nebuchadnezzar, which *were broken to pieces, and become like the chaff of the summer thrashing floors, which the wind carried away*, Dan. ii. 35; and forget not that Death as easily brings down the strong and mighty, as the most feeble and infirm.

Sleep not, O young maiden, with the foolish virgins mentioned in the gospel, Matt. xxv.; for ye know not at what hour the bridegroom will call you to the marriage supper of the Lamb, Rev. xix. 7—9. Though ye possess the greatest beauty in the world, yet remember that death will not suffer himself to be captivated by your charms; and that he mows

down the most lovely flowers in the garden, as well as the most common herbs in the field.

Ye old men, who tremble beneath a load of years, prepare yourselves for death with a holy alacrity : "Let your hope be as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, which entereth beyond the vail," even into heaven itself, whither the Saviour of the world "is entered, as a forerunner for you," Heb. vi. 19, 20. Look up with the eyes of your faith, and behold the ancient of days, who stretched out his arms to receive you into that glorious rest which remains to his people.

Would the Christian reader know the tendency of this discourse? Since death is certain and inevitable, there is nothing more uncertain than the hour of its arrival, we should live as if we expected to die every moment; having our souls always upon our lips, ready to resign them into the hands of our Creator; or, to speak with holy Job, *Having our flesh in our teeth, and our life in our hands*, chap. xiii. 14. Since we know not at what age, at what time, nor in what place, death will come upon us, let us look for him every where, and at all seasons. Since we are in this house of clay for no certain term, let us be ready to depart at the first warning; for it is better to go out cheerfully, than to be dragged out against our will. We should not let death carry us away, in the same manner as the sea tosses and drives before it a dead carcass; but we should imitate the discreet pilot, who trims his sails, and assists the wind and tide with the best of his skill. We should not follow Death, as the criminal follows the executioner who leads him to punishment, but as the child follows the father who conducts him to a feast. We should not encounter with death by constraint, as the ancient slaves fought with wild beasts in the Roman amphitheatres; but we should imitate David's courage, who issued forth, of his own accord, from the camp of Israel, to fight with Goliah. In short, it is better for us to attack and seize upon Death, than to be seized and swallowed up by it.

Come, then, when thou wilt, O Death! thou shalt never surprise me; for I wait for thee, at all hours with my weapons in my hand. Thou shalt not drag me away by force; for I will go willingly and cheerfully with thee; and though thou art mine enemy, yet will I not scruple to say to thee, in the language of the spouse to her well beloved, *Draw me, and I will run after thee*, Cant. i. 4. Nay, I will meet thee in the way, and receive thee with open arms. Instead of dreading thy coming, I hope and wish for thee; for at

thy first arrival, as soon as I have seen thee, I shall overcome thee. O happy day! that promiseth me such a glorious victory, such an eternal triumph!

II.

Prayer and Meditation upon the Uncertainty of the Time of our Death.

O God! in whose power are all times and seasons, I know that it is appointed unto all men once to die, and that the grave is the house which thou hast prepared to receive all mankind. The experience of all ages teaches us, that there is no one able to say, *I shall live for ever, and shall not see death.* Thou, O my God, who art the living God, and the Sovereign Judge of all the world, hast pronounced our irrevocable sentence in the earthly paradise; insomuch that I must be the most senseless of all men, if I did not firmly believe, that I shall die as others, and that I must go in my turn the way of all flesh. But, O Lord, thou hast been pleased to hide us from the sacred counsels of thine adorable providence, and hast not set before our eyes the hand that points to the last hours of our life. There is no shadow by which we can perceive with certainty the going down of our sun. We know not at what hour of the day, or night, thou wilt summon us to appear before thy tribunal. Grant me, therefore, O God of mercies, to be always ready to answer to thy call, and obey thy holy pleasure. Let me be like a ship at anchor, which only waits for a wind to set sail; or like a soldier, who only expects the call of the trumpet to march out to battle. O that I may imitate the good and faithful servant who watches for the coming of his Lord, and hears when he knocks at the gate; and be like the wise virgins, who are ready to meet the bridegroom, and to follow him into the marriage-chamber. As I know not at what age, at what time, nor in what place, death will present itself before me, grant that I may expect it at every age, at all times, and in every place; that I may live as if I looked to die every moment, that my soul may be upon my lips, and that I may be always ready to resign it into thy hands, O my God, who art the faithful creator thereof. Thus prepared by thy grace and mercy, whenever death comes upon me, I shall receive it with joy, as thy messenger, and follow it with cheerfulness, being assured it will guide me into the light of life, and bring me into the everlasting palace of thy glory. *Amen.*

III.

Prayer and Meditation for those that are young.

O God, the inexhaustible fountain of light and life, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world, in thee I live, move, and have my being. Thou, O Lord, hast formed and fashioned my body with thy hands, and hast breathed into it an immortal soul, created in thine image, and after thy likeness. Thou hast not only given me life, but thou hast continually watched over it to preserve me from all the dangers to which my frail and miserable nature is exposed. Whatever health and strength I enjoy, if thou withdrawest thy mercy and protection, which uphold me, I shall immediately sink down and return to the original dust from whence thou wast pleased to call me. O Lord, since my life is from thee, graciously grant, that I may live only for thee; and that all mine actions may tend to thy honour and glory; that I may joyfully dedicate to thee the first-fruits of my life, and the flower of my age; that I may remember my Creator in the days of my youth; and that I may refrain from vice, before the evil days come, in which I shall say, I have no pleasure in them. O Father of mercies, blot out all the sins, and support me under all the infirmities of this dangerous and unstable stage of my life. Stop all the irregular motions and transports of my youthful blood, and subdue unto thyself this miserable flesh that rebels against its maker. If neither the reverence due to thy holy laws, nor the dread of thy all-seeing eye, be sufficient to deter me from evil, and incline me to that which is good, grant I beseech thee, that I may always remember that death is unavoidable, and that perhaps, it is already in my bosom; and that I may always think I hear the voice from heaven, which calls me to appear in judgment before thee, the Sovereign Judge of the world, before whom our most secret thoughts are not hid. Let not my youth, and the vigorous health I enjoy, betray me to fancy myself secure against the darts of death; but let me remember that the flower is shorter lived than the fruit, and that a young plant is sooner pulled up than an aged tree. Let me place before my eyes the vast numbers of children and young persons who are buried every day, and how few live to be old; and let me never forget, that the blessed Jesus, who died for us, and who is entered as our forerunner,

into thy Paradise, died in the flower of his age. O God, wean my heart and my affections from this world, from all its false pleasures, and deceitful vanities. Grant me thy grace, that I may place all my joys and felicity in thee; that I may not flatter myself with the foolish notion of having years of delight to come; but that I may always bear in mind that there is no season of life exempt from its evils, its cares, crosses and troubles. The green fruit hath its grubs that devour it, as well as the ripest, and the young bud upon a rose-tree hath its thorns, as well as the rose that is full blown or that whose leaves fall off through age. The longer I live in this miserable and corrupt world the more evil I shall see, and the more sorrow I shall feel; the more I shall pollute my soul, and offend my God. O Lord, I shall have lived long enough, when I shall have learned to live well, and am prepared to die. And I know that I shall possess these tokens of thy favour, if I make thy sacred word my guide, and thy holy spirit sanctifies it unto me, O Lord, that I may find thy yoke easy, and thy burthen light. O gracious God, if thou prolongest my days, multiply in me the rich abundance of thy grace, and inflame my heart with thy love. But if thou seest good to cut short the thread of my life, O grant that I may not be so much mine own enemy as to afflict myself because thou art pleased to remove me betimes to a happy immortality, to shorten my labours, put an end to the cruel war of my passions, and to crown me in the middle of my course. I shall have glory and comfort enough, provided thou givest me strength sufficient to subdue sin, to overcome death, and to triumph over all the enemies of my salvation. Grant that I may never be so senseless as to regret a transitory moment; seeing thou hast promised me an eternity in which there is no variation nor shadow of change; and that thou wilt give in heaven a youth that blooms with everlasting joys. O my God, I am ready to glorify thee, either by my life or by my death, since thy holy Son Jesus is gain to me, whether I live or whether I die. *Amen.*

IV.

Prayer and Meditation for such as are in years.

O God, the ancient of days, the Father of eternity, thou willest that at all times, and in every season of life, thy children should be prepared to die. How much more ought I

to prepare myself, O Lord, who am full of days, and have already one foot in the grave? Grant, I beseech thee, that as my outward man visibly decays, my inward man may be renewed day by day; that this infirm body, that bows towards the earth, may teach me to lift up my thoughts to heaven; that the furrows on my brow, and the wrinkles in my skin, may be a means to efface the sins of my soul, and free my heart from all its fears and anxieties; that though my knees tremble, and my hair is become white through age, my faith may be strong and my hopes still vigorous and blooming; and let death, which threatens me every moment, teach me to lay hold on the Prince of Life. O Lord God of heaven and earth! thou seest my poor and wretched estate. I begin to be a burthen to myself, and useless to others. My soul is weary of living, and tired out with the weakness that oppresses me: for my body is become, as it were, the grave of my soul, and I do not so properly live as die daily. My Creator and my God! thy providence watched over me before I was born; and from the womb of my mother thou hast been my strong God. Thou hast blessed, O God of mercies, mine infancy, and hast crowned all my years with thy paternal favour, and loving kindness. O leave me not in my weak and helpless age! My vigour decays; be thou the rock of my heart, and the strength of my life. My years are carried away as with a flood; and I am now no more than the shadow of a shadow that declined. Yet thou art the same for ever, and thy years shall have no end. As thy existence is without beginning, so it is without end. Renew my youth like that of the eagle; reanimate and warm this cold and dead clod; and O, above all things, reach me thine hand from on high. Take me from this house, which is all rotten with age, and raise me up to thy new Jerusalem. I have no longer any taste for the meat and drink of this world; it is time that thou satisfy me with the delights of thy holy table, and that I drink of the new wine of thy kingdom. I am already, as it were, out of the world; and my life holds but by a slender thread. Lord now let thy servant (thine handmaid) depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation. *Amen.*

CHAPTER IX.

The third remedy against the Fears of Death, is, to consider that God hath ordained the time and manner of our death.

We are either hypocrites, *who draw nigh unto God with our mouths, and honour him with our lips, while our heart is far from him*, Matt. xv. 8; or we must desire the accomplishment of the will of God, and resign ourselves to it without murmuring; for every day we say unto him in our prayers, *Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven*, Matt. vi. 10. Whence it follows, that we cannot have death in abhorrence, nor fly from it in a cowardly manner, if we are firmly persuaded, as we ought to be, that God has appointed the time, and ordained the manner of our death. In truth, our complaints of death are generally occasioned by our having our eyes too much fixed below, and by the too great deference we pay to second causes. We are like a dog that bites the stone that strikes him; for we curse the means which God employs to remove us from the world.

Now, it is easy to show, that God hath numbered our days; and that, in the eternal counsel of his adorable wisdom, he hath decreed the hour and moment of every man's death. For, besides what our Saviour Jesus Christ saith in general, "That God hath put in his own power the times and the seasons," Acts i. 7, Job expressly tells us, "The days of man are determined, the number of his months are with thee; thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass," Job xiv. 5. The royal prophet speaks to the same purpose in the 31st Psalm, "I trusted in thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my God; my times are in thy hand," ver. 14, 15. He expresses himself to the same sense in Psalm xxxix. "Behold, thou hast made my days as a hand-breadth," ver. 5; and in Psalm lxviii. "Unto God the Lord, belong the issues from death," ver. 20. The prophet Moses likewise teaches us the same lesson, in his divine song; where he represents to us, that it is God who reduces man to ashes, and maketh him return to his first original: "Thou turnest

man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men," Psal. xc. 3.

King Hezekiah's comparison is very remarkable. He compares the life of man to a piece of cloth, which God hath weaved, and cuts off at his pleasure, "Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent: I have cut off like a weaver my life: he will cut me off with pining sickness: from day even till night wilt thou make an end of me," Isa. xxxviii. 12. Hannah, the mother of the prophet Samuel, leaves no room for a doubt: "The Lord killeth and maketh alive, he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up," 1 Sam. ii. 6. And nothing can be more express to our purpose than these words of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, *I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell, and of death*, Rev. i. 18. This great Lord and Saviour shutteth the gates of the grave when he pleaseth; and it is not possible to open them against his will. In short, *whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's*, Rom. xiv. 8.

Reason also, enlightened by revelation, teaches us the same good and salutary lesson: for if God presides over the conception and birth of man, and appoints the time of our entrance into the world, why should he not also preside over our death, and point out the time of our departure? The royal prophet speaks thus to God: "My substance was not hid from thee when I was made in secret and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance yet being imperfect, and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them," Psalm cxxxix. 15, 16. But, in my opinion, we may say to him, in much stronger terms, The scattering of my bones shall not be hid from thee, when this miserable body shall fall in pieces as rotten wood, or a moth eaten garment; thine eyes shall see me, when death shall cut off the thread of my life, and separate what thou hast joined together with such admirable wisdom; thy providence shall watch over my last moments; and nothing shall happen unto me, but what thou hast ordained, from the beginning, in thy secret counsel.

If God decrees the time of our resurrection, and if without his express command *his spirit will not breathe upon our dry bones, to cause them to live*, Ezek. xxxvii., is it in the least probable, that our breath should depart from our nostrils, and that our body should fall into the bed of cor-

ruption, without the express order of the great and living God? He who hath appointed their course to the sun, moon and stars, that shine in the firmament, hath he not also appointed his children their course, who are to shine for ever before him, as bright stars, in the new heavens, where righteousness does for ever dwell? He *who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a span; who hath weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance*, Isa. xl. 12; *who hath stretched out the earth with a plummet, and set bounds to the sea;* hath he not also meted out to us the measure of our life, and marked its last period with his finger? He who hath numbered the kingdoms of Heathen princes, hath he not also numbered the days in which he will please to reign here below in our hearts by his Holy Spirit? And hath he not appointed the time when we shall ascend up to the heaven of heavens, to reign in the kingdom of his glory?

If God *numbers the hairs of our head*, how much more will he number the days of our life; and if *a sparrow falls not to the ground without his permission*, Matt. x. 29, 30, how is it possible that a soul should take its flight to heaven without his order? He who *putteth our tears in his bottle*, Psalm lvi. 8, who writeth our afflictions in his book, and keepeth an account of all our sorrows, shall he not also keep an account of the life and death of men; and hath he not writ in his book the days which we are to spend in this vale of tears? He *who knoweth thy down-sitting and thy up-rising, who compasseth thy path and thy lying down*, Psalm cxxxix. 2, 3; hath he not also observed thy rising at thy birth, the way of thy life, and thy lying down at thy death?

In short, if it is true, that God, in his infinite wisdom, hath ordained how long this world shall continue, it is no less certain, that he hath also prescribed bounds and limits to the life of man, who is the little world, and a compendium of the great one.

As our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ teaches us, that *no man by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature*, Matt. vi. 27: so we find by experience, that all our care and industry never will be able to add one year, no, not one day, nor even so much as a single moment, to the duration of our life.

If life and death were not in the hand of God, there would be nothing settled or constant, either in the kingdom of the earth, or in the church of Christ. The prophets would be

often convicted of grievous errors, and elections from eternity would, in a manner, be totally abolished; for the most weighty affairs of kingdoms depend upon the lives of their princes; and the death of one man is sufficient to overturn an empire, or to change entirely the face of affairs. If Alexander the Great had been destroyed in his cradle, what would have become of the prophecy of Daniel, who represents to us the glorious victories this prince should obtain over Darius, king of the Medes and Persians, by the emblem of *a he-goat that runs against a ram in the fury of his power, breaks his two horns, and stamps upon him with his feet?* Dan. viii. 7. And if Cyrus had died before he had made himself master of the kingdom of Babylon, how would Isaiah's prophecy have been accomplished, who not only points out this young conqueror in the most lively colours, but also calls him expressly by his name, and engraves these words of him in the eyes of the sun, a hundred and fourscore years before he was born: "I have said of Cyrus, he is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid?" Isa. xliv. 28.

Had the devil had power to have taken away St Paul's life before his journey to Damascus, on which he was converted by a glorious miracle, Acts ix., how could the decree of God have been fulfilled, *who separated him from his mother's womb*, Gal. i. 15, to make him a chosen vessel, and a faithful ambassador of his Son? Had the good thief never seen the light, or had he been killed upon any of his robberies, how could he have been converted upon the cross, where he repented of his crimes? Or how could he have heard, just before he expired, these words of eternal comfort from the mouth of our blessed Saviour, *Verily, I say unto thee, to-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise*, Luke xxiii. 43.

The very Heathens themselves perceived some ray of this divine truth; but they have overcast it by their impertinent and ridiculous fables. For their poets feign, that there are three fates or goddesses; one of which spins, another winds, and the third cuts off the thread of every man's life. By these gross images, they endeavour to teach us, that God only lengthens or shortens man's life at his pleasure.

As it is certain, therefore, that God hath numbered and set bounds to our days; so it is as certain, that he hath appointed, in his infinite wisdom, the means that shall convey us out of the world. If one dies in peace, and another is

slain in war; if one expires in his bed, and another on the scaffold; if one perish by famine, and another is cut off by the pestilence; if one is struck with thunder, and another torn to pieces by wild beasts; if one is drowned in water, and another consumed with fire; in short, whatever way the separation of the soul and body is effected, it is not without the express leave of our heavenly Father. Therefore, when we see the strangest accidents come to pass, and the most unexpected and tragic deaths before our eyes, we should call to mind the saying of the prophet Jeremiah, when he beheld the plundering and burning of Jerusalem, "Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not? Out of the mouth of the Most High proceedeth not evil and good?" Lam. iii. 37, 38. We must remember with Isaiah, "That it is God that forms the light, and creates darkness; that makes peace, and creates evil," ch. xlv. 7; and this exclamation of the prophet Amos should echo to the very bottom of our hearts, *Shall there be evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it?* ch. iii. 6; that is to say, shall there be any kind of affliction or death in that place, which God hath not ordained, and directed by his wise providence? If the devil could not destroy Job's flock of sheep, Job i., nor hurry headlong into the sea the herd of swine, without his leave who holds him fast in chains, Matt. viii. 32; let us persuade ourselves, that all the powers of hell and the world cannot cause us to die by a violent death, if God hath not so appointed in the counsel of his wisdom. So that if at any time a prince or magistrate should say to us, in Pilate's language, "Knowest thou not, that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?" John xix. 10; being armed with a holy confidence, let us answer him with our Saviour, "Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above. Without the permission and will of God thou canst not take from me a hair of my head."

We read in the book of Judges, that when Abimelech assaulted the tower of Thebez, he intended to take it by storm; a woman cast from the tower a piece of mill-stone, that fell upon his head, and broke his skull, Judg. ix. If we look farther than second causes, this accident appears altogether fortuitous, and the chance of war; but we must lift up our eyes to the Almighty hand of an all-seeing power, far more skilful than this poor woman: for the same history tells us, that by this means God accomplished Jotham's pro-

phecy, and rendered the wickedness of Abimelech, which he did unto his father, in slaying his seventy brethren.

Ahab, king of Israel, had disguised himself to fight against the Syrians: a soldier of the enemy's army draws his bow at venture, and smote him between the joints of the harness, of which wound he died, and the dogs licked up the blood that run from his wound, 1 Kings xxii. A carnal and worldly mind would say, upon this occasion, that it was only an accident of war; but the Spirit of God tell us, that this happened to fulfil the prophecy of Elijah, and the dreadful threatenings which he had pronounced against the wicked prince, who, by tyrannical and devilish means, had invaded the possession of another; Thus saith the Lord, in the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine, ch. xxi. 19.

When we consider the tragical death of Josiah king of Judah, it seems at first view to be altogether owing to the boiling heat of youth, which carried him contrary to all the maxims of prudence, obstinately to fight against Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, or to the strength and swiftness of his enemies, according to the complaint of the prophet Jeremiah, "Our persecutors are swifter than the eagles of the heaven; they pursued us upon the mountains, they laid wait for us in the wilderness. The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord was taken in their pits, of whom we said, Under his shadow we shall live among the Heathen," Lament. iv. 19, 20. But to understand the truth, we must enter farther into the sanctuary, and adore the wisdom of God's decree, who, before he poured down his just vengeance, and punished the people of Israel for the many idolatries, and enormous crimes with which they had polluted themselves, would take this good and religious prince into his eternal rest, and give him a richer and more noble crown than he wore upon earth, fulfilling, by this means, the promise which he had made him by the prophetess Huldah: "Behold, therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace: and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place," 2 Kings xxii. 20.

When we meditate upon the death and passion of Jesus Christ, it seems at first sight altogether chargeable upon the envy of the Pharisees, the treachery of Judas, the mutiny of the people, the injustice of Pilate, the scoffs of Herod, and the cruelty of the Roman soldiers. But the holy apostles, Peter and John, to whom our blessed Saviour had related

the choicest secrets of his kingdom, consider these wicked agents as no other than the instruments which God made use of to bring about the great work of redemption; for thus they speak of it in the fourth chapter of the Acts, "Against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done," ver. 27, 28.

If a man kills his friend ignorantly, and without design, for example, *if he goes with him into a wood to hew timber, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the axe to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbour that he die*, Deut. xix. 5., nothing can be imagined more accidental, if we look no further than second causes. But God has formally declared, *That it is he himself that delivers such an one into the hand of him that slays him thus inadvertently*, Exod. xxi. 13; and therefore to secure the innocent authors of such murders, God appointed cities of refuge for them to fly to, Num. xxxv.; Josh. xx.

As, when our hour is come, all the riches in the world cannot pay our ransom, nor all the wisdom of counsels, nor the strength of kingdoms, protect us from the power of death; so, on the contrary, when it pleaseth God to preserve our lives, all the subtlety and artifice of the devil, and the power and malice of the world, cannot take them from us.

Esau, inflamed with hatred, and thirsting after revenge, forms a resolution to slay his brother; and it seems to have been on purpose to perpetrate this horrid fratricide, that he went to meet him with four hundred men; but God, who holds in his hand the hearts of all men, who turns the stony rocks into fountains of water, and the flints into rivers of oil, forced out of this hardened heart tears of love and compassion. Esau, instead of drawing his sword against his brother, embraced him in the most tender manner, fell upon his neck, kissed and wept over him, Gen. xxxiii.

Jacob's sons had wickedly conspired the death of their brother Joseph, and were ready to imbrue their hands in the blood of this innocent lamb; but by a secret and admirable providence, God put a stop to their hellish design. The Sovereign Lord of the universe, who by his infinite wisdom draws light out of darkness, made use of the most inveterate malice that could enter into the hearts of men, to accomplish his good purpose, and to raise his servant to that height of glory and honour which he had prepared for him. These

inhuman souls, full of a diabolical envy, had combined together against this pious and just person, to hinder the fulfilling his miraculous dreams; but quite contrary to their intention, they made way for the accomplishment of those things which God had revealed to his prophet. Therefore, when his brethren were afraid lest he should revenge himself upon them, when he had the power in his hand, he said to them with a heart that overflowed with love and charity, Am I in the place of God? As for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good, &c. Gen. l. 19, 20.

David, a man after God's own heart, fell into a multitude of very great and terrible dangers; insomuch, that he was often brought down to the very gates of death; but God delivered his soul from death, his eyes from tears, and his feet from falling, Psal. cxvi. 8. In the wilderness of Maon, king Saul had compassed him round about on every side, so that there was no help or succour to be expected from man; but God wrought his deliverance by a wonderful providence: for just as they were going to lay hands on him, a messenger comes unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land, 1 Sam. xxiii. 27. Neither the continual persecutions of this cruel tyrant, nor the formidable conspiracy of his unnatural son, nor the revolts and insurrections of the people, nor all the furious tempests raised against him by hell and the world, were able to extinguish his lamp of life. But after he had served his own generation, by the will of God, he fell on sleep, Acts. xiii. 36; as a man that lays himself down, and takes his rest sweetly after a long and painful labour.

Queen Jezebel bore the most bitter hatred to the prophet Elijah. She had sworn by her gods, that she would put him to death, 1 Kings xix. 2; but God preserved him by a miracle from the bloody hands of that infernal fury. Nor was his providence less miraculous in preserving him from famine, whom he had thus delivered from the sword and from violence. He commanded the ravens to feed him, and to bring him bread and flesh, morning and evening, 1 Kings xvii. 6. He increased for his sake, the poor widow of Zarephath's cruse of oil, and barrel of meal, ver. 14; and when he fainted in the wilderness, God, who is absolute over all his creatures, sent him meat and drink by the ministry of an angel, 1 Kings xix. In short, all the storms that were raised against him by the prince of the power of the air, were not able to hurt him; but when God saw good to crown

his labours, he took him up to heaven in a chariot of fire, 2 Kings ii. 11.

The Syrians, being enraged against the prophet Elisha, because he discovered their most secret counsels, and frustrated all their designs, besieged the city of Dothan to seize upon this man of God. His servant, beholding the great host of horses and chariots which encompassed that weak city, cried out, Alas, my master, how shall we do! and he answered, Fear not; for they that be with us, are more than they that be with them; and immediately the eyes of the young man being opened by the prayer of Elisha, he saw: and behold the mountain was full of horses, and chariots of fire, which God had sent from heaven to guard his servant the prophet, 2 Kings vi.

The Jews often conspired against our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and attempted to kill him. They even went so far as to take up stones to stone him, John x. 31; and once led him to the brow of a hill, that they might cast him down headlong; but he escaped out of their hands, and passed through the midst of them without receiving any hurt, Luke iv. 29; nay, they sometimes found it impossible to lay so much as a finger upon him, when they resolved to seize him. The reason which the spirit of God gives us, is, because his hour was not yet come, John. vii. 30.

The high priest and the Sadducees, being inflamed with envy, and hellish fury, laid hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison; but because the time of their martyrdom appointed by God was not come, the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, Acts v. 18, 19.

When Herod saw that the Jews thirsted after the blood of these blessed servants of God, and that they took delight in their sufferings, he beheaded St James, and afterwards proceeded to take St Peter, whom he put in prison and delivered to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him, intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people. But the hour was not yet come in which this holy apostle was to be crucified for the glory of him who was crucified for his salvation. Therefore the night before his intended execution, as St Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and the keepers before the door, behold a light shined in the prison, and the angel of the Lord came upon him, and smote him on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly, and his chains fell off from his hands. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself and bind on thy sandals:

and so he did. Then he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me; and he went out and followed him, and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. When they were past the first and second ward, they came to the iron gate, which opened of its own accord, and they went out, and passed on through one street, and forthwith the angel departed from him. Then Peter, being come to himself, said, "Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectations of the people of the Jews," Acts xii.

In short, when the hour is not yet come which God hath marked out with his finger to take unto himself his faithful servants, there is no miracle so great which he will not work for their sakes; he dries up the seas, stops the mouths of lions, and denies the fire its natural heat; he preserves them in the midst of floods and flames, in the whale's belly, in the fiery furnace, and in the deepest gulfs.

If we would but examine the histories of our forefathers, and call to mind the things that we have seen with our eyes, and experienced from our infancy, we should find that the means which God hath employed, and which he daily employs for our protection and deliverance, are no less wonderful than those of former ages. The Lord's hand is not shortened, nor his Almighty power lessened; he hath as much authority as ever over both men and devils; and his eternal providence is no less watchful than heretofore, for the preservation of such as fear and worship him. If the eyes of our soul were as open as those of our body, or if we could but perceive the things that are of themselves invisible, we should see that God continually looks upon us with an eye of love and paternal care; and that he covers us with his hand, as with a buckler of proof against all the darts of the world, and of hell. We should see, that we are encompassed with a wall of fire, Zech. ii. 5; and that the angels of heaven are encamped round about us, Psal. xxxiv. 7. We should then acknowledge, that it is God *which holdeth our soul in life and suffereth not our feet to be moved*, Psal. lxvi. 9; and we should cry out with the royal Prophet, *O God, who is like unto thee? thou which hast showed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side*, Psal. lxxi. 19, 20, 21.

But notwithstanding this pious and wholesome doctrine is

plainly taught in the scriptures, and confirmed by so many rich examples, there are a great many persons who still object against it, and endeavour to overthrow it by a variety of arguments.

In the first place, they observe, that God promises to prolong the days of such children as honour their fathers and mothers, Exod. xx. 12.; Deut. v. 16; whence they think it ought to be inferred, that our life has no certain limited time; but that it is either lengthened or shortened, according as we obey or disobey the laws of God. But this is easily answered. For if we consult the style of the Holy Ghost, in the language in which this was originally written, we shall find, that the word which hath been translated *to prolong*, does not always signify to make a thing longer than it was, or than it should be, but simply to make it of a long continuance. So that God promises not here, that the children who obey his sacred laws shall enjoy a longer life than otherwise it ought to be, but only that he will grant them the favour to live long and happy in this world. The proof of this exposition is as clear as the light of the sun, from St Paul, who paraphrases the first commandment of the second table, in these words: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise), that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth," Eph. vi. 1, 2, 3. And even this promise must be understood with some exception, viz. if God shall judge it expedient for his glory, and for the good of his children. For there are a great many pious and obedient children, whom God removes from the world in the flower of their age, to give them a happier life, which hath no other limits than eternity.

In the next place, they allege the remarkable history of king Hezekiah, unto whom the prophet Isaiah was sent with this message, "Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live," 2 Kings xx. 1; nevertheless God, being moved to compassion by his prayers and tears, prolonged his life, and sent back the same prophet to tell him in his name, "I will add unto thy days fifteen years." To this objection, I answer—That, according to the ordinary course of the world, and the events of natural causes, Hezekiah was to die of that disease; for the Scripture saith expressly, that *Hezekiah was sick unto death;* that is to say, that his disease was mortal in respect of second causes, and the ordinary course of nature. Therefore, these words, *Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die,* ought to be understood with

this exception, Thou shalt die unless I deliver thee by a miracle, and if I employ not mine Almighty power to heal thee, and restore thee to thy health. We may likewise understand them with this condition, Thou shalt die, unless thou repentest, and turnest unto me with prayers and tears, in the same sense that God caused it to be proclaimed in the streets of Nineveh, *Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown*, Jonah iii. 4.

But let no one conclude from hence, that Hezekiah's repentance was the cause of the lengthening of his days; and that, consequently, it was an accident altogether casual and uncertain. On the contrary, God, who had decreed, in his unsearchable wisdom, that this wise and religious prince should live so many years beyond the natural disposition of his body, had likewise resolved to draw from his heart sighs and groans, and from his eyes the tears of repentance; for *known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world*, Acts xv. 18.

There are others who argue against this opinion still more grossly. If God, say they, hath numbered our days, and set bounds to our life, we labour in vain when we take so much pains about the sick, administer remedies to them, and pray to God for their recovery. In like manner, such may affirm, that it is in vain for us to eat or drink; and that it is a foolish care to hinder mad people from casting themselves out of windows, or from swallowing down poison; because, let them act as they will, they shall live neither a longer nor a shorter time than God has ordained from all eternity. But however plausible this objection may appear, it is most absurd and ridiculous, and can only proceed from the extremest ignorance, or the most propense malice; for it is self-evident, that when a man proposes to himself any end, he does not exclude the means by which he is to attain it; on the contrary, he pre-supposes them, and connects them together by a necessary succession.

God had determined, in the counsel of his wisdom, to preserve the patriarch Jacob, and his children, during the grievous famine that prevailed for the space of seven years; but, to accomplish this gracious purpose, he sent Joseph into Egypt to gather together all the food of the seven years of plenty, Gen. xli. The prophet Isaiah had told Hezekiah, from God, that he should live yet fifteen years; nevertheless he commanded, that they should take a lump of dried figs, and lay it on the bile of that prince, 2 Kings xx. 7. It had been revealed to David, that he should reign over the house

of Israel; and to confirm this oracle, he had been anointed by the hand of the prophet Samuel, 1 Sam. xvi. 13; but this hinders him not from seeking, by all possible means, to preserve himself from Saul's unjust persecution. And when the prophet Nathan assures him, that God will establish his posterity on the throne, and confirm them in it for ever; this puts no stop to his prayers, nor abates the ardour of his devotion; on the contrary, it quickens and inflames it: therefore he thus poureth out his heart to God, *O Lord of Hosts, God of Israel, thou hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house, therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee, &c.*, 2 Sam. vii. 27.

Our Lord Jesus Christ knew for certain all that should befall him; nevertheless we find him spending the greatest part of his nights in prayer; and when his life was in danger, he neglected not his lawful and innocent means of preserving it. He said to his apostles, *Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered*, Matt. x. 29, 30. Yet this hinders him not from recommending to them this lesson, *When they persecute you in one city, flee ye into another*, ver. 23.

God had determined to save St Paul's life, and the lives of all those that sailed with him; and this was revealed to the apostle by an angel from heaven; nevertheless, when he saw the ship-men about to flee out of the ship, he said to the centurion, and to all the soldiers, *Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved*, Acts xxvii. 31. In short, the means are subordinate to the end, in such a manner, that to offer to divide them, as to suppose them contrary, is the height of folly and extravagance.

It is entirely without foundation, what they advance against this eternal truth in the case of king Asa. They affirm, that this prince was reproved for seeking to the physicians in a desperate illness. The words of the sacred text are these, "Asa, in the thirty and ninth year of his reign, was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians," 2 Chron. xvi. 12. The light of the sun is not more clear and brilliant than the meaning of the Holy Spirit. This prince is not blamed because he desired the assistance of physicians, but because he neglected to seek help of God, and to call upon him in the day of his distress. Most certainly

he that is sick may as freely take physic, as he that is well may eat and drink; but we must not altogether place our confidence in the remedies, but rather in God, who sends both sickness and health. As *man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*, Matt. iv. 4, so it is not by the physic alone that a patient is cured of his distemper, but by the blessing and power of him who maketh sore, and bindeth up; who woundeth, and his hand makes whole, Job v. 18. Therefore as we ought never to eat or drink, before we pray to God to vouchsafe his blessing upon our meat and drink, and to grant them the virtue to nourish and support us: so we should never take any physic without first praying to God, that he will please to sanctify it unto us by his blessing, and to grant it the power to cure our disease. *Every creature of God is good, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God, and prayer*, 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.

It is worthy our remark here, how much those people are to blame, who when they mourn for the loss of their relations or friends, instead of looking up to heaven, look down upon earth, and confine all their attention to natural causes. Instead of adoring with all humility, the wise providence of God, that presides over all worldly events, and directs even the minutest circumstances, they fly into transports of passion and murmur. They delight not to nourish in their minds a displeasure that consumes them, and are continually breaking forth into many vain and useless complaints, which only serve to open their wounds, to make them bleed afresh, and to renew all their sorrow. If he had not been in such a place, if he had not been engaged in such a war, if such a physician had not been called, or if another had been sent for, if this or that had not been done, if less blood had been taken from him, or if he had lost more, if they had suffered him to take more nourishment, or if less had been given him, my brother or my sister, my child, my wife or my husband, had been still alive. It may be, thou art mistaken, my friend, and the disease could not be cured by any thing less than a miracle; but when it should be otherwise we ought nevertheless to lift up our eyes to heaven, and to acknowledge the finger of God: for oftentimes he blinds the physicians, so that they know not the nature of the distemper, or he suffers them to apply remedies contrary to the disease. As he breaks the staff of our bread, Levit. xxvi. 26; that is to say, its nutritive strength and virtue; so he

likewise takes away his blessing from the most sovereign remedies, and renders them altogether useless and ineffectual. It is the same with all the other accidents that befall us, and that bring us to our graves. For when it pleaseth God to remove any person out of the world, he sometimes suffers him to shut his eyes to all the light of reason and prudence, and to cast himself headlong into the most forbidding danger. As when he purposed to destroy Absalom, he caused him to be led away by evil counsel, and defeated the prudent advice of Ahitophel, 2 Sam. xvii. 14.

Therefore, since God hath appointed, even before the creation of man, the time and manner of every one's death; at what hour, in what place; or by what means soever, death deprives us of our friends, or strikes at our person, let us always possess our souls with patience, and not suffer the least repining or desponding word to proceed out of our mouths.

If it suddenly snatches away from thee thy children, or thy dearest friends, murmur not against it. Remember that it only puts in execution the decrees of God's eternal will, and that it carries with it a commission sealed with a signet of the living God. Adore, therefore, with all humility, the Supreme Majesty of heaven and earth, and say to him, as David, with a holy submission, *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it*, Psal. xxxix. 9.

I am far from desiring thee to have a heart of flint, without natural affection. Piety hath nothing barbarous; it deprives us of our bowels: the tender affection that thou bearest thy children, can never be displeasing to the Father of mercies, if thou keep it within its proper bounds, and suffer it not to run to excess. It is lawful for thee to sympathize with their griefs, to weep when they are ill, and to pray to God to restore their health. But when he hath once received them into the rest of his glory, thou must then calm all thy sighs, dry up thy tears, and say as David did, after the death of his beloved child, *I shall go to them but they shall not return to me*, 2 Sam. xii. 23.

Are they taken from thee by a violent death? Stop not thy consideration at the evil blasts that have hurried them away, but lift up thy mind to the great and mighty God that bringeth forth these winds out of his treasures; and armed with a holy constancy, say, with the most patient of all men, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord*, Job i. 21. I am only a weak instrument which God hath employed to bring them into the world;

but God is their King, their Father, their Creator, and, what is still more, their Saviour and Redeemer. Therefore it is but just and reasonable, that he should dispose, at his pleasure, of his subjects, his children, his workmanship, and those whom he hath redeemed with his precious blood.

The master of a family gathers, when he pleases, the flowers and fruits of his garden; sometimes he cuts off the buds, and sometimes he waits till they are full blown; sometimes he gathers the fruit while green, and at other times he lets it hang on till it is ripe. And shall not God have the same power to dispose, at his will, of all that grows upon his inheritance? The master of the family hath not created the trees and plants that are at his command; but God hath made and fashioned with his own hand all his children, and all the men in the world. Our flowers quickly fade, and pass away, as it were, in a moment; our fruits soon spoil, and grow rotten, notwithstanding all the precaution we use to preserve them; but the flowers that God cuts off, or pulls up, he transplants into his heavenly paradise, where he gives them a perfect and divine beauty, the bloom of whose glory never fades; and the fruits that he gathers, however green they may be, he preserves through all eternity, in unspeakable sweetness.

Doth death threaten thy person, when it hath thus deprived thee of thy dearest friends? Be not frighted at its appearance; for it is not able to anticipate a single moment the hour which God in his wisdom hath appointed. And when the hour is come, and God shall call to thee from heaven, kick not against the pricks, nor stop thy ears at the voice of thy Creator; but say, with the prophet Samuel, *Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth*, 1 Sam. iii. 10. Since thy glorious presence goeth with me, I am ready to depart from this tabernacle, and to leave this wilderness, to enter into the heavenly and happy Canaan, Exod. xxxiii.; say with our blessed Saviour, *Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee*, John xvii. 1.

Hast thou lived a great many years in the world? Ascribe it not to the constitution of thy body, thy manner of living, nor to the skill of thy physicians; but remember that it is God who hath lengthened out thy days, and go and humbly bow at his feet thy hoary head; which the scripture styles, *a crown of glory*, Prov. xvi. 31.

Art thou threatened with death in the flower of thy youth? Be not afflicted at it, and let not the least word proceed out of thy mouth, but what is seasoned with the salt of true piety.

Remember that it is God himself who thus cuts short the thread of thy life, and puts a period to thy mortal race. Thou hast as much reason to grieve that thou wast born so late, as that thou diest so soon. Instead of wasting thyself in useless complaints, and dashing an earthen vessel, newly formed, against the rock of eternity, adore thy Creator, and return him thy hearty thanks, that he is graciously pleased to crown thee in the midst of thy course, and so bountiful as to bestow upon thee, the wages of the whole day, when thou hast laboured but a few hours. He is very merciful to thee to transplant thee before thou hast felt the heat of the day and the scorching of the sun. It is the gale of his divine favour that drives thee thus swiftly into the haven of salvation. Think not, therefore, that God's calling thee away in the bloom of thy youth, is a testimony of his displeasure and hatred; for to hasten to make a person happy is no token of ill will. It may be, that God calls thee because he hath found some good thing in thee, as in Abijah, the son of Jeroboam, king of Israel, 1 Kings xiv. 13. Because he loves thee tenderly, and thou art greatly in his favour, he will remove thee from the approaching evils, as he did Josiah, one of the holiest and most religious princes that ever reigned, 2 Kings xxii. 20. Because thou walkest before him, and seekest to please him, by conforming thyself to his holy will, he will take thee up into his heavenly paradise, as he did Enoch, Gen. v. 24; for fear the temptations of the world should corrupt thy godly disposition, and thou shouldst be turned from the way of righteousness by the wicked artifices and suggestions of the enemy of thy salvation.

As there are some rich stuffs, whereof the very ashes are precious, and others, the cinders of which are good for nothing but to be cast away; so there are some precious hoary heads, wherein the rich relics of righteousness abound; whereas there are others, only fit to show us the follies and vanities of human nature. As there is some sort of wine, that becomes the better the older it grows, and preserves its goodness down to the very lees; whereas, there are other wines that soon turn sour, and become unfit for use; so likewise, there are some men, whom old age makes better and wiser; like those Indian trees that yield a precious balsam only when they begin to decline and wither. The old age of such is most honourable, and sends abroad a blessed perfume of piety. But there are others, who grow worse and more corrupt with age, and send forth a most noisome savour; under a white head they hide a black and most pol-

luted conscience; though their body decays, the vices of their mind grow young again, and engender monsters. Instead of weeping for the sins of their youth, they add crime to crime, and become more hardened in evil; while old age imprints more furrows and wrinkles in their rebellious hearts, than it does upon their foreheads.

Neither men nor their lives are to be measured by the ell; we must not consider how long, but how well we have lived; or in what manner we have employed the course of this life. For there are some young men who have the wisdom and prudence of old age; and, on the contrary, there are old men who degenerate into infancy, and some who can never properly be said to have passed that simple age; the first are twice children, and the others are always so. Some young men have performed such worthy deeds, that when we read their histories, one would judge they had lived several ages; whereas there are some old persons who have no other proof of their having lived a long time in the world, than the church-register, their gray hairs, or the multitude of their scandalous and wicked actions. It was this consideration that made the author of the Book of Wisdom to say, "For the honourable age is not that which is of long time, neither that which is measured by the number of years; but wisdom is the gray hair, and an undefiled life is the old age," Wisd. iv. 8, 9. It is certain he hath lived long enough, who hath learned to live well, and hath prepared himself to die well.

What would it profit thee to have a miserable and languishing life lengthened out a few days? Art thou afraid to be happy too soon? And fearest thou to see the end of thy torment? Where is the traveller that endeavours to lengthen out a painful and dangerous journey? Is the workman afflicted to have finished betimes his laborious task? Does the soldier murmur when he is relieved from his watch? Miserable man! what are all the years after which thou sighest thus in vain? "For one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," 2 Pet. iii. 8.

He that sails upon the sea, admires the vast extent of its waters, and the variety of its waves, which sometimes mount up to the clouds, and at other times sink down, as it were, into a bottomless abyss. And those who travel by land behold, with astonishment, on one hand deep vallies, and on the other mountains, which lift their heads into the skies. But if God had taken us up into the palace of his glory, and we

should cast our eye from the high heaven, where he reigns upon this inferior, if not contemptible part of the creation, both sea and land, with all their swelling waves, and most prodigious mountains, would seem to us an even plain, or rather they would appear no more than a single point. Thus, when we compare men one with another, we shall find, that some have lived long, and others but a little while; that some are old, others young; but, in respect to God, there is no difference between youth and old age, between Methuselah, who lived nine hundred sixty and nine years, Gen. v. 27; and a child that hath only just seen the light of the living; for the life of all men is but a moment in comparison to eternity.

If thou art ready to die for righteousness sake, by a violent death, meditate seriously upon this saying of the royal prophet, *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints*, Psal. cxvi. 15. Arm thyself with a holy constancy, and say with Eli, the high priest, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good*, 1 Sam. iii. 18. Imitate the generosity of St Paul, and engrave in thy heart these divine words, "The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying, that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me; neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God," Acts xx. 23, 24. Have always in thy mouth, and in thy heart, the prayers that our blessed Lord and Saviour offered up to God in his most bitter agony, *O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt*, Matt. xxvi. 39. Comfort thyself with meditating upon this divine lesson, *He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal*, John xii. 25. O Almighty God, the enemies of thy glory and thine heavenly truth have gathered themselves together against the dear children whom thou hast sanctified by the blood of thine everlasting covenant; but they shall do nothing but what thy hand and thy counsel, thy power and thy wisdom, have determined before to be done, Acts iv. 28.

V.

Prayer and Meditation upon the hour of Death.

O Lord, who dost govern all things by thine adorable wisdom, and hast reserved the times and seasons in thine own power; thou hast not only written my name in the book of the living, but hast also measured out the length of my life, and appointed the hour of my death. Thou hast numbered my days, and set me bounds which I cannot pass. For thou, O Sovereign Ruler of the universe, didst point out with thy finger, from all eternity, the moment of my entrance into the world, and that of my departure from it. This miserable body is a weak vessel made of earth, subject to all manner of infirmities; nevertheless it cannot be broken, except by those divine hands which formed and fashioned it. If a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without thy leave, how much less shall my soul ascend up into heaven without thy command! My Father and my God, grant I beseech thee, that I may not be of the number of those whom the fear of death surrounds with continual terrors; but that I may place all my confidence in Thee, who dost kill and make alive, who sendeth down to the grave and raisest up again. Let Satan, and the enemies of thy glory, lay what snares they will for me, they shall be able to do nothing but what thy hand and thy counsel have before determined from the foundation of the world. Without thy holy and divine permission, they are not able to pluck a hair from my head, nor to diminish a moment of the time I am to live in this mortal flesh. O Almighty and most merciful God, I recommend to thee my soul, as to my faithful Creator, and yield it entirely into thy hands. Behold I am ready to accomplish thy will, and to obey thee without resistance, whether thou art pleased, that this soul, which thou hast created in thine image, and which is a spark of thy divinity, shall remain in this body, that I may serve thee in the land of the living, or whether thou wilt take it up into heaven, that it may glorify thee with thy blessed saints and triumphant angels. *Amen.*

VI.

Prayer and Meditation on the manner of our Death.

O God, the Creator of all flesh, and the Father of all spirits, I know that every kind of death of thy saints is precious in thy sight; and that, in what manner soever I happen to die, thou wilt take care of my salvation. When I weigh things in the balance of my sanctuary, I find that it matters not whether my spirit issues out of my lips, or through a wound, so that it enters into thy glory to enjoy thine eternal happiness. What matter is it, whether my lamp goes out of its own accord, or whether it be blown out by some sudden blast, so that it be lighted again by the immortal beams of the Son of Righteousness, and shine for ever glorious in the highest heavens? I shall be sufficiently happy, by whatever death I die, if I die in thee, O Lord, and enter into thy rest, to receive the recompense of all my labours. From the beginning, O Lord, thou knowest all thy works; at one view, thou discoverest the depths and seest through an endless eternity. As thou hast marked the moment of my death, so thou hast also appointed the manner of it. I must therefore, O Almighty and ever-living God, repose myself upon thine adorable providence, and rest satisfied with thy uncontrollable decrees. But, O my God, and heavenly Father, if thou wilt grant me the liberty, who am but dust and ashes, to speak unto thee, and to pour out the desires of my heart before thee, I humbly beseech thee to be so gracious as to let me know my end, that I may not be surprised by death, like Job's children; but that thou wilt please, of thine infinite mercy, to give me timely notice of my departure, as thou did to thy servant Hezekiah. I ask not the warning of many years, but of a few days, or at least of a few hours, that my soul may not be disturbed by evil thoughts, nor affrighted by the false insinuations, and malicious suggestions of the devil; but that I may end my days with all peace and tranquillity of mind; that I may always have a right use of my senses, of my reason, and understanding, and the assistance of thy grace, that I may glorify thy holy name, and edify my neighbours until the last moment of my life. Let not my soul, therefore, be snatched away by violence, but enable me to render it voluntarily into thy merciful hands. *Amen.*

VII.

Prayer and Meditation for one that dies in a foreign country, in the midst of Infidels.

O my God and heavenly Father, how full of bitterness is this trial! who can express the agonies of my mind. In the moment of my greatest distress, my most urgent necessity, and my most dangerous conflict, I see myself destitute of all human assistance. Here I am not only at a distance from my country, and the agreeable company of my friends, deprived of all those spiritual comforts of which I have at present the greatest need, in this my extremity, but also to my unspeakable grief, here I am in a barbarous nation, in the power of my most cruel and irreconcilable enemies. I am not only without any body to administer consolation unto me, and to strengthen me in the faith of my blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, but every thing round about me adds to my affliction, and increases my sorrows. I am here among the adversaries of thy truth, who labour to destroy my interest in Christ, and to shipwreck my soul in the very port of eternity. I have not only death to encounter, but hell itself, and all the fury of the infernal spirits. O Almighty and most merciful God, suffer me not to lose my courage, and to sink under the present temptation. By thine adorable providence, and out of thine abundant mercy, supply all my wants and infirmities, and grant that I may, with the shield of faith, quench all the fiery darts of Satan. I am surrounded with many visible and invisible enemies; but they that are for me are more in number than those that are against me. I am far from my native country; but I am not for that reason the further from heaven, of which all this earth is but the centre. I am at a distance from all my relations and friends; but nothing can set me at a distance from thee, O God of mercies, who lovest me with an unchangeable love. I am in the embraces of my heavenly Father and my God. I have no minister to assist me in these my last moments; but I know, that thou wilt send me thy holy angels, as once to thy beloved Son, in his bitter agony. Thou who art the shepherd of my soul, wilt administer consolation unto me; thy staff and thy crook shall support me through this valley of the shadow of death. O Lord, thou dost mighty things, which are not to be searched out, and so many wonders that

it is not possible to number them. Thy grace is sufficient for me, and thy power is made gloriously manifest in mine infirmities. Thy Holy Spirit, who is the true comforter, and the great power of the Almighty, shall comfort me in these mine afflictions, and make me in all things more than conqueror. Thou art stronger than all other beings, so that nothing can snatch me out of thy hands; I am certain, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any creature whatever, can separate me from the love which thou hast declared to me in Jesus Christ, my Lord. This precious faith, with which thou hast armed my soul, shall vanquish the world, triumph over hell, and destroy death itself. *Amen.*

VIII.

Prayer and Meditation upon the death of any beloved Person.

O my God, I acknowledge that there is nothing sure and unchangeable on earth, but thy holy precious promises; and that therefore we ought to enjoy the things of this world as if we enjoyed them not. Thou hast snatched from my arms, and plucked from my bosom, the person that was dearest to me, and the most nearly allied to my soul. Thou hast cleft my heart, and torn out my bowels. Thou hast separated me from myself, so that my life is become a burthen unto me. I considered this object of my love as thy gift from heaven, and a mark of thy favour and liberality; it was my greatest joy and my sweetest consolation: the day that deprived me of it, overwhelmed me with sorrow, and plunged me into a sea of bitterness; but that which increases my grief, and redoubles all my torment, is, I am afraid that this stroke is an effect of thine anger and just vengeance. O Lord, my God, I must needs have offended thee in a most grievous manner, seeing thou chastisest me with so much severity, and makest me feel so sharp an affliction. I am unworthy of all thy favours, since thou hast taken from me such a precious jewel, which was shown to me as lightning, so quickly it passed away. I fear I have been wanting in my duty, and that this death that destroys me is the effect of my own blindness; methinks I might have prevented this terrible accident; and that, if I had behaved myself otherwise than I have done,

my life had not been inclosed in the grave. O God of mercies, pardon my excessive sorrow, calm my sighs, and stop the current of my tears. Remove from me all these vain cares that prey upon my heart, and all these disquiets that consume me: deliver my soul from this cruel rack, on which it torments itself, and from these troubles that are more than the weakness of human nature can bear. Instead of looking at second causes, and the circumstances of the death of this beloved person, give me grace to remember that the least things, as well as the greatest, are directed and governed by thy wise providence; and that both good and evil proceed from thy divine appointment. Let me never forget that thou holdest in thine Almighty hand the keys of life and death; and that it is thou alone who sendest down to the grave, and raisest up from thence again. O Sovereign Monarch of the universe, thou not only givest the reins to death, but thou likewise governest and appointest all the means by which it removes us from the world. Let me therefore lay my finger upon my lips, because it is thy doing; or, if I open them, let it be to adore thy justice, and show forth thy praise. The person I lament was very near and dear to me, even like another self; but he (or she) was also thy creature, thy child, and a member of the mystical body of thy beloved Son. We believe, that we have a right to dispose of our workmanship, and that of which we have bought with our money; and shalt not thou, O God, dispose at thy pleasure of that which thou hast created after thy likeness, and bought not with corruptible things, as with gold and silver, but with the precious blood of the Lamb, without spot or blemish? Thou hast an only Son, who is the brightness of thy glory, and the express image of thy godhead, whom thou hast not spared for me: and shall I, Lord, refuse thee my heart and my bowels? Thy beloved came down upon the earth to suffer a most cruel and ignominious death upon the cross; but thou hast taken up into heaven the person whom my soul loved, to crown him (or her) with a glorious and ever blessed immortality. Shall his (or her) felicity, therefore, be the cause of my affliction? and shall his (or her) rest be the subject of my disquiet? It is the property of true love to prefer the happiness of the beloved person to our satisfaction; wherefore our Saviour told his apostles, *If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father; for my Father is greater than I*, John xiv. 28. Between thee, O great and living God, and us miserable worms of the earth, there is an infinite distance; and all our most chaste and

innocent pleasures in this life are no more than a drop of water that is dried up with the least breath of wind, when compared with that inexhaustible sea of delights which we shall enjoy in thy presence. I weep for him (or her) whose tears thou hast wiped away. I put on a mourning habit and wear a black scarf for him (or her) whom thou hast clothed with robes of joy, and adorned with a scarf more white than snow, and more resplendent than the sun. I delight in darkness, while he solaces himself at the fountain of light. I seek a solitary and melancholy retreat, while he rejoices amongst the thousands of angels, and the glorious company of immortal spirits. I sigh without ceasing, and he sings a new song, the song of the blessed, which is always in his mouth. All my complaints and groans cannot bring him back upon earth: and was it possible, it would be unjust to attempt it: such charity would be cruel, such love most barbarous. How could I resolve to make him leave the heaven of eternal felicity, to expose him again to the furious storms of this tempestuous world; to make him descend from the car of triumph, the magnificent throne to which thou hast exalted him, to engage him in new conflicts, and load him with new chains? Could I strip him of his robes of light and glory, to cover him with darkness, and clothe him with our infirmities? Could I be so inhuman as to take him from a river of delights to plunge him in a sea of bitterness? to take from him the bread of thy kingdom, and the fruits of the tree of life, to feed him with the bread of affliction and the bitter fruits of mortality? Could I have the heart to snatch him from thy bosom, the breasts of eternal comfort, and the fulness of joy which he possesses in thy presence, to fold him again in our helpless arms, to make him suck the venom of our misfortunes, and to overwhelm him with grief and uneasiness? In a word, could I be so senseless as to wish him unbound from the bundle of life, to be the sport of death? He is passed from death to life, and would I have him pass back again from life to death? He is passed from misery to happiness, and would I have him return from happiness to misery? We shall go to him, but he will not come back to us. Therefore, since life is short, and passes away as a thought, it will not be long before we shall behold each other again in the light of the living.

O Lord, how wonderful are thy works, how magnificent are all thy ways, and how unsearchable is thy wisdom! I acknowledge, that what thou hast done is not only for thy glory, and for the advantage of this happy creature whom

thou hast taken into thine eternal rest, but also for my good, and the instruction of all my friends. In taking of him (or her) who was all my joy, my comfort, and my only hope, thou wouldst make trial of my obedience and my faith, as heretofore thou makest trial of the father of the faithful, when thou requirest of him his only son Isaac, in whom thou hadst promised that all the families of the earth should be blessed. But, O Lord my God, to the praise of thy mercy and sovereign goodness, I must own that my trial is nothing like so severe as his: for thou commandest Abraham to sacrifice his son with his own hands, to pour out his blood before thee, and to reduce his body to ashes; but thou requirest no sacrifice from me but that of my obedience and submission to thy holy will, that I may say with the high priest Eli, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good;* and with thy servant Job, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.* Thou hast plucked up the root which fastened me strongly to the earth, and hast cut asunder the beloved band which bound me to the world, in order to lift up my heart and affections to heaven. One part of myself, and that which I always considered as my most precious treasure, is already with thee; and the wings of that divine love with which I feel myself inflamed, transport me thither at every hour and every moment. Instead of continuing these vain sighs and fruitless tears for him (or her) whom I cherish with so much affection and tenderness, give me grace, I beseech thee, to prepare for my removal from this earthly tabernacle. Grant that I may imitate the piety, zeal, faith, constancy, and all the holy and heroic virtues of those whom thou hast received into thine eternal rest, and crowned with thy glory. *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his. Amen.*

CHAPTER X.

The fourth remedy against the Fears of Death, is, to wean our hearts from the world.

The children of Israel found no reluctance when they left the wilderness. At the first command which God was pleased to give them for that purpose, they passed over Jordan with

incredible joy; the reason of this was, because they dwelt in tents which were easily removed; and they had been used for many years to sigh after the land of Canaan. Now, death is the same to us, in regard to our heavenly paradise, as the river Jordan was to the children of Israel, in respect to the promised land. Whence it appears, that the only true means to reconcile us to this passage, and to make us pass through it cheerfully, is to divest ourselves of every thing that may hinder us, by attaching us to the world, and to hold ourselves always in readiness to depart.

To this end, it is not necessary that we should go out of the world, but that the world should be banished and driven out of us, and that we should renounce all its vanities and unruly appetites; insomuch that we may be able to say with the apostle, *The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world*, Gal. vi. 14; for there are many persons who withdraw their bodies from the world, but leave their hearts and most tender inclinations behind. As Lot's wife, who went out of Sodom, but left there her treasures and delights, her heart, and most ardent wishes; or as the Israelites, who, when they went out of Egypt, left behind them their cursed affections, with their flesh-pots and onions.

The same thing happens to many who separate themselves, without any necessity, from the society of men, and affect I know not what strange and austere kind of life. They leave the acquaintance of wise and virtuous persons, and the lawful use of those blessings which heaven hath bestowed upon them. They deprive themselves of every thing that is amiable in the world, and most proper to glorify God, and edify their neighbours; but many times they carry with them every thing that is corrupt and vicious, legions of wicked thoughts and carnal desires. By this means they give way to the devil, and expose themselves to all his assaults; for that wicked serpent delights rather in the dens of wild beasts, and in the shepherd's cabin, than in the dwellings of princes and the palaces of kings. The most horrid and execrable sins often breed in deserts and places of retreat, rather than in public, and in great cities that swarm with inhabitants. Lot remained chaste in the most abominable city that was in the world; but when he fled to the foot of a mountain, into a cave, to dwell, he defiled himself with a monstrous incest. When Satan intended to tempt the Lord Jesus Christ, he carried him into a desert, and up to the top of a high mountain. Whence we may judge that this subtle enemy of mankind hath learnt, by fatal experience, that the most pri-

vate and solitary places are the fittest to lay his snares in. If our blessed Saviour, who was *holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners,* Heb. vii. 26, and hath been able to overcome all manner of temptations; we are not of the same temper, neither are we furnished, like him, with armour of proof against all the inflamed darts of the devil: for our miserable flesh delights in its own destruction. It opens both ear and heart to the deceitful promises of Satan, and suffers itself to be cheated by his illusions. It flatters and lulls us asleep in its bosom: and then, like a treacherous Delilah, it betrays us into the hands of our most cruel and irreconcileable enemy.

Some put on shirts of hair and gird themselves with knotted cords, whom the devil drags to hell by the invisible chains of their unruly lusts. Others climb up to the tops of frozen mountains, and yet their hearts burn with the most impure fires: while others scorch their bodies in the sun, whose souls are bathed in all the voluptuous pleasures of the most luxurious cities. Some affect a mournful solitude, and hurry into a desert, whose desires and longings are for the world and its vanities: they live amongst serpents and wild beasts; and yet their hearts are at the ball, and they themselves are dancing there in imagination with wanton young females. They seem to have their bodies mortified, but their affections are unsubdued. Others have their hands lifted up to heaven, whose minds are enslaved to the earth, and rooted in the vain and filthy pleasures of the age. Some have a lamp burning before them, whose understanding is wrapped in thick darkness, more palpable than that of Egypt. Others have an empty stomach, whose souls overflow with the most abominable passions. In short, some live in appearance, like angels, who are possessed with a legion of devils; and others who seem to have no concern with the world, yet lodge the whole world in their hearts.

Under a coarse habit, there sometimes dwells more envy, more vanity and ambition, than under a gorgeous attire of silk and gold. Through a tattered garment may often be perceived souls swelled with pride and arrogance, and many times the designs of kings, and the lofty thoughts of the greatest monarch, are to be found in the equipage of a beggar. To speak plainly, we are not so much attached to the world by the good things of this life, as by the love and affection we bear to them: for without doubt there are many persons who are more earnest for the things they want, than others that enjoy them. Many poor people have a far greater pass-

ion for riches than ever Solomon had in the midst of all his mighty treasures. Some silly women, who are covered with rags, nay, even some of the basest and most wretched servants, have more vanity and pride in their hearts than ever queen Esther had in her rich and most glorious array. The prophet Daniel was exalted to a high and eminent station, being governor of the third part of the vast empire of the Medes and Persians; nevertheless he was no more attached to Babylon than if he had nothing there but a sepulchre, and had worn the chains of a slave. He sends forth as many sighs, and pours out as many tears as if he had been sitting upon the ashes of Jerusalem.

Some miserable beggars are more loath to leave their rags, than sovereign princes to lay aside their purple. Such are more enslaved to their filth and indigence, than the greatest monarchs to the glory and splendour of their empires. Death takes as much pains to free men from a prison, and to set them at liberty from a dungeon, as to drive them from a palace, or to pluck them down from a throne. The poor and necessitous who lodge upon the hard earth, make as much resistance as the rich, who are stretched upon the softest down. The unhappy slaves that row in the gallies, are as unwilling that death should loose them from their chains, and free them from their misery, as the most potent kings and emperors are to leave their sceptres and their crowns; and I am persuaded, that David was more ready to quit his kingdom, and all its treasures, than many poor wretches are to depart from their dunghills and their poverty. Some persons are tormented with the gout, the stone, and other grievous and acute diseases; nevertheless they more passionately desire to live than many who enjoy a perfect and vigorous health. Carnal and earthly souls are so much wedded to the world, that they feel a horrible regret, and an unspeakable anguish, when they are to depart from a body rotten and falling to pieces with old age; whereas others, who are more spiritualized, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and the powers of the world to come, Heb. vi. 4, 5, depart most joyfully out of young and vigorous bodies, flourishing in their full strength and beauty.

We must not, therefore, remove our arms and legs out of the world, but our passions and affections. If God bestows his earthly blessings upon us, we are not to imitate the example of that extravagant philosopher, who cast into the sea his gold and precious stones, that he might not have the trouble to keep them, and who wilfully threw them

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away, that he might not be any longer in the fear of losing them. But we must take heed that they cause us not to make shipwreck of our faith ; and that we preserve them not at the expense of our consciences. For the soul is far more precious than the body, and life is far more valuable than raiment, Matt. vi. 25. *Since God giveth us richly all things to enjoy*, 1 Tim. vi. 17, we should show ourselves ungrateful to his goodness, rebels to his wise providence, and unjust and cruel to ourselves, churlishly to refuse the means of using and employing those blessings ; *For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving ; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer*, 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.

The honours and riches derived to us from our birth, or that we obtain by lawful and just methods, are to be numbered among the blessings of God ; therefore Esther, who was but a poor stranger, received with joy as a favour from heaven, the imperial crown that was put upon her head, and refused not to be the bride of the greatest monarch then living. Joseph readily embraced the power and dignity with which king Pharaoh invested him ; and the prophet Daniel, not only accepted the honourable commands which were bestowed upon him by the king of Babylon, but likewise employed all his power and credit to raise his companions to places of trust, and the principal governments of that empire. God indeed sometimes puts sceptres into the hands of cruel and profane persons, such as Pharaoh, Ahab, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar and Herod, to teach us, that dominion is not the chief good of man, and that we must aim at a more excellent kingdom, and at a more lasting and solid happiness : but then he also places upon the throne men after his own heart, whom he cherishes as the apple of his eye, such as David, Solomon, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah and Josiah, to teach us, that the fear of God, and the expectation of an immortal crown, is not incompatible with the honours of this life, nor with worldly glory ; for *Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come*, 1 Tim. iv. 8.

The riches of the earth are no more hurtful than its honours, unless it be by accident : they are highly useful and advantageous to such as employ them well, and dispose of them with a religious prudence : they are powerful helps to true piety, and excellent means to glorify God, and to exercise a virtuous compassion ; nay, I may venture to call them the beauty and lustre of the zeal and charity of God's children. Riches, it is true, turn to evils, and are ill situated in

the hands of a brutal and sordid wretch, such as Nabal; of a merciless and voluptuous person, such as the rich glutton in the gospel; of a treacherous and perfidious thief, such as Judas; and of a thoughtless and debauched young man, such as the prodigal son. But then they are blessed both of heaven and earth, when they fall into the hands of a Joseph, who nourisheth therewith his father and all his kindred; of a David, who employs them in offerings to Almighty God, in the sight of all the people; of a Solomon, who builds therewith a magnificent temple; and of a Mary Magdalen, who bestows them, not in luxury and vanity, nor in curious trinkets, but to buy a box of precious ointment, which she pours on the head of the Saviour of the world. They are blessings indeed, when such a one enjoys them as Cornelius the Centurion, who employs them in alms, the perfume whereof ascendeth up to the throne of the God of mercies. In short, our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the eternal wisdom of the Father, hath pronounced with his sacred lips, that *it is more blessed to give than to receive*, Acts xx. 35.

I am not ignorant of the oracle of this great God and Saviour, *Whoever loves father or mother, houses or lands, more than me, is not worthy of me*, Matt. x. 37, which was spoken to teach us, that we must renounce, with all our heart and spirit, all the things in the world, and of this present life; and that we must be always ready to forsake them, in case we cannot keep them without offending God, and giving occasion of scandal to his church; but without such an absolute necessity, God requires us not, in any place of scripture, actually to forego our worldly possessions.

I also know very well, that when a young man asked our Saviour, *What shall I do to inherit eternal life?* this wisest of teachers answered, *Sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me*, Luke xviii. But this was a particular command given to a particular person, upon a particular occasion; wherefore it is not possible that we should gather any conclusion to bind others to the same action; for otherwise this would oblige all Christians in general to sell what they have, without exception, and give it to the poor. This vain-glorious Pharisee, had boasted of having kept all the commandments of God from his youth upward. To root out of his mind this overgood opinion of himself, and to give a vent to the swelling of his pharisaical pride, our Lord puts him to the trial, by enjoining him to sell all that he had, and to give it to the poor. At hearing this, the poor young man

went away very sorrowful, for he was very rich, and his heart and strongest affections were placed upon his earthly treasures; by which he discovered, that he was far from loving God with all his heart, and with all his strength, seeing he loved his worldly possessions more than Christ and his blessedness. It therefore plainly appears, O devout souls, that this command, given to this particular young man, extends not to all in general; for if it had been so understood, the holy apostles, who were zealous after every thing that tended to perfection, would not have been contented with losing the enjoyment of their goods, to follow Christ, as they themselves declared unto him, *We have forsaken all, and followed thee*, Matt. xix. 27. But they would have kept nothing for themselves; which course they never took: for St John, Christ's beloved disciple, had a house, wherein he entertained the holy virgin, after our Saviour's passion, John xix. 27; and the other apostles had reserved their ships, their nets and their tackling, wherewith they returned to their trade of fishing, after Christ's resurrection, John xxi.

Our Saviour, upon the occasion of this young man's disobeying this express and particular command, to sell all that he had and give it to the poor, tells his disciples, that a *rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven*, Matt. xix. 23. But then in another place, he explains this passage in such a manner, that he leaves not the least shadow of a difficulty, when he says, *How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!* Mark x. 24. So that he speaks not of all rich men in general, without any exceptions, but of such only who put their trust in their riches. Therefore the apostle St Paul does not command those who are rich to cast away their effects, and absolutely renounce them; but he exhorts them not to put their confidence in them, so as to become more vain and haughty: for thus he speaks to Timothy, *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy*, 1 Tim. vi. 17.

Here are, therefore, the best rules, according to my judgment, which a true Christian can observe, who desires to render his soul acceptable to God, and to attain the necessary dispositions for a happy death.

1. We must employ all our endeavours, and set all our affections to work, to secure to ourselves the spiritual and eternal advantages of the world to come; we must thirst impatiently for the grace of God, and the gift of his Holy Spirit;

we must sigh after the treasures of heaven, and labour with all our might to attain the incorruptible crown of glory and immortality. Our blessed Saviour himself gives us this holy lesson in the sixth chapter of his gospel according to St Matthew, *Seek ye first*, says he, *the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you:* and in the sixth chapter of St John, *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life.*

2. As Solomon built first the Lord's house, and then his own palace, 1 Kings ix.; so we ought to labour first for the advancement of God's kingdom, and the edification of his church, after which we may have the liberty to employ ourselves about the affairs of the present life, and the exercise of our civil calling; but then our employment or calling must be just, and warranted by the laws of God and man; for he that gathers riches by unlawful means, is no other than a thief and a robber.

3. Before we engage in any work, we should offer up our prayers to God, that he will vouchsafe his blessing upon it, and say to him with Moses, *Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands, establish thou it*, Psal. xc. 17; for without his assistance and blessing, all our labour is in vain. *The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich; he bringeth low, and lifteth up*, 1 Sam. ii. 7. *Neither is he that planteth, any thing*, saith St Paul, *Neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase*, 1 Cor. iii. 7; with whom agrees the royal prophet, in these significant words, *Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain who build it*, Psal. cxxvi. 1.

4. Our labour must be without repining, and distrusting the providence of God; we must banish out of our minds all vain thoughts, and groundless expectations, that disturb us. We must pluck out of our hearts all the cares and disquiets that prey upon us, and must imprint in our memories that excellent saying of David, *Cast thy burthen upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee*, Psal. lv. 22; and that of St Peter, *Cast all your care upon him, for he careth for you*, 1 Pet. v. 7; nor must we ever forget this wholesome exhortation of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and the cares of this life," Luke xxi. 34.

5. Above all things, we must guard against covetousness,

which is a most servile vice, and tacitly denies the providence of God, and his fatherly care. To this purpose St Paul exhorts us, in express terms, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," Heb. xiii. 5; and to beget in us a horror of this infamous vice, he tells us, "They that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition," 1 Tim. vi. 9. He adds, "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which, while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." In short, he proceeds so far as to pronounce, that *covetousness is idolatry*, Col. iii. 5; *and that the covetous man is an idolater, who hath no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God*, Eph. v. 5; therefore we ought to engrave in letters of gold, this excellent lesson of the wisest king in the world, "Labour not to be rich, cease from thine own wisdom," Prov. xxiii. 4.

6. If, notwithstanding our continual labour in a lawful vocation, it pleaseth God to afflict us with poverty, and to bring us down to the dust, of a mean estate, let us learn to possess our souls in patience, and to have always before our eyes the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, became poor for us, that we might become rich by his poverty. Let us beseech him to grant us the blessed disposition of his holy apostle St Paul: and that we may be able to say with him, I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound; every where and in all things, I am instructed both to be full, and to be hungry; both to abound, and to suffer need: I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me, Philip. iv. 11, 12, 13. Remember, Christian souls, to lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal, Matt. vi. 20. Labour to be rich in faith and good works, that ye may be heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love him, James ii. 5.

7. But, on the contrary, if it hath pleased God to bless their labours, and his Almighty and liberal hand hath raised thee up to great honour, so that thou overflowest with riches, thou must remember to enjoy them in such a manner, that they may not enslave thee, and, according to St Paul's advice, to possess them, as if thou possessed them not; and must

remember, that the fashion of this world passeth away, 1 Cor. vii. 30, 31. We must not place our confidence in them, nor pride ourselves upon their account. There is something else in which we ought to glory, as God himself exhorts us in this divine precept, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, Jer. ix. 23, 24.

8. We must not only wean our hearts and affections from the world and its vanities, trample them under our feet, and esteem them like dirt, in comparison of the unspeakable treasures of heaven; but we must also be ready to leave them at a moment's warning, as so many vain and perishable trifles. As we are to possess them without inquietude and fear, so we must part from them without grief and murmuring. Though we should lose in one day all that God hath blest us with in this world, we should arm ourselves with a holy constancy, and say with Job, The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord, Job i. 21.

9. If we happen to lose our goods, honours, dignities, in the service of God, and for the profession of Christ's gospel, in such a case we should not only bear the loss with a Christian patience, but we should embrace it with a holy joy; because a loss of that nature, in so just a cause, is of great advantage as well as great glory. This was the practice of the faithful Hebrews, of whom the apostle gives this honourable testimony, Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and enduring substance, Heb. x. 34. Christian souls, place before your eyes the example of the prophet Moses, who esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward, Heb. xi. 26.

10. Whilst we enjoy our goods, we must have respect to the poor, and be liberal in alms; or to speak in St Paul's language, "As we have an opportunity let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith," Gal. vi. 10: "He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given, will he pay him again," Prov. xix. 17; and our Saviour promiseth, "That whosoever shall give to drink unto one of the meanest of those who believe in him, a cup of cold water only, shall in no wise lose his reward," Matt. x. 42. Alms are a seed that

is cast upon the earth; but its flowers, and most excellent fruits, are to be gathered in heaven; "He that soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully," 2 Cor. ix. 6. But it is not like that seed mentioned in the 126th Psalm, *They that sow in tears shall reap in joy:* for those who bestow their alms unwillingly, are, in the sight of God, as those who withhold them. Therefore St Paul declares, *Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing*, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. God loveth a cheerful giver, 2 Cor. ix. 7, and is well pleased with sacrifices, Heb. xiii. 16. Remember, O Christians, that God will judge you at the last day, not according to your learning and eloquence, and the riches, honours and dignities, by which you have been distinguished in this life, but according to your alms, deeds, and acts of charity and hospitality, Matt. xxv., and as you have distributed to the necessities of the saints, Rom. xii. 13. Therefore, "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations," Luke xvi. 9. And that those whom you leave behind you, may be able with justice to engrave upon your tomb, "He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness," that is, his charity and the compassion in which he delighteth, "endureth for ever," Psal. cxii. 9.

11. Finally, we must not only wean our hearts and affections from the riches and honours of this life, and all the vanities of the world, but we must also deny ourselves, subdue our passions, and crucify our flesh with its lusts. To this we are exhorted by our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who crieth to us from heaven, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me," Matt. xvi. 24.

That we may engrave this lesson more thoroughly in our minds, we should consider:

1. That we are but strangers and pilgrims in this world, and that *here we have no continuing city*, Heb. xiii. 14. The houses which God hath given us, are not so properly dwellings, as inns for our convenience. This was the frequent meditation of those great patriarchs, who *saw the promises afar off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them*, Heb. xi. 13. For the apostle informs us that they confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth, and that they sought a better country, that is, a heavenly one. This was Jacob's language when he appeared before Pharaoh: Few and evil have the days of the years of

my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers, in the days of their pilgrimage, Gen. xlvii. 9. And not only the ancient patriarchs, who never had any other possessions in the world than a sepulchre, or some small piece of ground, have acknowledged themselves to be strangers and pilgrims, but also kings and princes, whom God hath sanctified by his Holy Spirit, have frankly confessed the same. Witness David, who, not in the time of his banishment, nor of his flight, nor in his calamities and misery, but in his most flourishing state, and in the midst of his triumphs and vast riches, prostrates himself before God, and says, I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were, Psal. xxxix. 12. And where he speaks, not only of himself, but also of all God's children that are in the world, he makes no difficulty to confess, we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding, 1 Chron. xxix. 15. Rich and poor, masters and servants, princes and subjects, all of us in general, may justly say to the children of this age as Abraham to the sons of Heth, I am a stranger, and sojourner with you, Gen. xxiii. 4. Now he that travels in a strange country, may gather some flowers as he passes, or take with him a few ears of corn; but if he be wise he will never stay to build a palace. If he is well treated in his inn, he will not despise the good cheer; but if his entertainment is bad, he will bear with patience the inconveniences he meets with, and only laugh at the ill management he observes. If the road is full of mud, briars and thorns, he will endeavour to get out of it as soon as he can; and if it is good and pleasant, he will make the more haste over it. In short, instead of spending his time in making needless inquiries, every one that is on a journey, dreams of nothing but home, and how to get forward on his way. In the same manner, being accustomed to plenty and want, to riches and poverty, to honour and dishonour, we ought to forget those things which are behind, and reach forth unto those things which are before, to press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, Phil. iii. 13, 14.

2. Consider also, I beseech you, that we are not only strangers and sojourners in the world, and that we are not always to inhabit in this foreign country, but that our passage will be but a few days. We need but little to nourish and entertain us, during this short race; at the end of which we shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall

the sun light on us, nor any heat, Rev. vii. 16. As Jacob and his sons, when they went into Egypt, had no more corn, nor any other kind of food, than what was necessary for them in the way; because they were certain to meet with a rich abundance of all good things in Joseph's house; so we need not make any great provision for ourselves in this life, because we are going to meet Christ Jesus, our elder brother, unto whom God hath given all power in earth, Matt. xxviii. 18. We are going to a country that overflows with all manner of true riches, glory and happiness.

3. We are not only strangers, but we are also soldiers, that fight under the banner of Jesus Christ our head, who doth judge and make war in righteousness, Rev. xix. 11. Job tells us, that there is an appointed warfare to man upon earth, Job vii. 1. But I may venture to affirm, that this warfare is chiefly for such as long after a glorious immortality, and that God calls them forth to very grievous and violent encounters. Therefore St Paul exhorts his beloved disciple Timothy, to behave himself as a good soldier in this good warfare, 1 Tim. i. 18; and to fight the good fight of faith, chap. vi. 12. Now, no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, 2 Tim. ii. 4.

4. Moreover, we are like to soldiers who war in an enemy's country, not to establish themselves there, but only to obtain a free passage, having other views, and wanting nothing more than to return into their own country. We have no ambition to get into our hands the goods and inheritances of the children of this world, nor to rob them of their crowns and sceptres; we have no other request to make to them, but that which the children of Israel made to the Edomites, when they were going to possess the land of Canaan, which God hath promised to their fathers, Numb. xx. We desire leave to pass peaceably by the king's highway, to go and take possession of the inheritance which God hath prepared for us from the foundation of the world. We will not so much as take a bit of bread without paying for it, nor drink a cup of water without leave.

5. This life is a race, and the world is the race-plot we are to run in. Now, such as run in a race must take heed, that the thorns catch not hold of them in their course, and that their feet sink not in the mire and clay; and that they may run the swifter, they must cast off every thing that may burthen or encumber them. If, therefore, we would run this race, so that we may obtain the prize, 1 Cor. ix. 24; we must take care that the thorns and briars of the world take not hold of us,

and that we sink not in the mire of the filthy pleasures of this life. We must cast away all the burdens with which we are loaded; and especially the burden of sin, which is so grievous, that the whole creation groaneth under it, Rom. viii. 22. To this purpose is the apostle's exhortation, Wherefore, seeing we are encompassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, Heb. xii. 1, 2.

6. Our life is a continual wrestling: For we wrestle not only against flesh and blood, but against principalities against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places, Eph. vi. 12. Now, he that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things, 1 Cor. ix. 25. If, therefore, for a corruptible crown, men keep under their bodies, bring them into subjection, and abstain from all the pleasures of life; how much the rather ought we to practise the like for an incorruptible and glorious crown?

7. God will have us to be conformed to the image of his Son, Rom. viii. 29; and that we should follow his steps, 1 Pet. ii. 21. Now this blessed Saviour, in representing his own condition, tells us, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head, Luke ix. 58. Therefore he made this noble confession before Pontius Pilate, My kingdom is not of this world, John xviii. 36. And when he reproved the gross and carnal expectations of the two disciples who were going to Emmaus, he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? Luke xxiv. 25, 26. Therefore, according to his holy example, we must have no portion in this world, and must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God, Acts xiv. 22.

8. I also judge, that it is altogether necessary that we should represent unto ourselves continually, that, properly speaking, we have only the use, and not the propriety, of God's creatures. We are intrusted with his favours, as the stewards of his blessings. At every moment he may call upon us to give an account of our stewardship, and may deprive us of our honours. We should therefore look upon our houses and possessions with the same eyes that we look

upon books, or any other goods that are lent us. For as we are not displeased to restore what we have borrowed, and enjoyed as long as it pleases the rightful owner to lend it; so we should cheerfully leave this transitory life, and all our worldly possessions, provided we could but persuade ourselves, that all these things belong to God, and that he hath lent them but for a moment.

9. Moreover, it is highly convenient for us to meditate, without ceasing, upon the pains and labours we are at, to acquire the riches of this world, and to attain to its honours and dignities. As the husbandman, when he hath manured his field, and watered it with his sweat, is many times deceived of all his promising expectations; so it commonly happens to the covetous and ambitious: they toil and labour in vain; the good things which they think they grasp, slide away between their fingers like water, or as wax that melts before the fire; and all the honours which they imagine they already embrace, vanish like a shadow, or as smoke that flies up out of their reach: as they have sowed vanities, so they reap nothing but grief and displeasure.

10. Consider how little satisfaction and contentment there is to be found in the most perfect enjoyment of all the advantages of this world. They are like drink, which leaves us still athirst, and like those hungry viands which cannot satisfy our appetite. They are like the waters of the well of Sychar, whereof our Saviour said to the woman of Samaria, *Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again*, John iv. 13. It happens to the children of this world, as to a hungry man, who dreameth, and behold he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as to a thirsty man, who dreameth, and behold he drinketh; but he awaketh and behold he is faint, and his soul hath appetite, Isa. xxix. 8. For he who hungers after money, is never contented with his treasures; and he who thirsts after vain glory, is never satisfied with all the honours and dignities of the world. Instead of quenching his thirst, these things only serve to increase and inflame it. The whole world was not large enough to content the foolish ambition of an Alexander: for it is recorded that he wept when a philosopher told him, that there were yet many worlds to conquer. This man, for whom six feet of earth were sufficient, had the vanity to desire to rule over a thousand worlds, if there had been so many.

11. All the treasures of Peru, and all the honours of the world are not able to give peace to the soul, nor repose to a troubled conscience. When a poor man has got together

a heap of gold and silver, or when a mean person is raised from the dust to the highest offices, and most eminent dignities, his misery continues still, though it changes its appearance; nay, it is often the more insupportable, in that it puts on a false lustre, and a deceitful gloss, because such are forced to live always masked to hide their grief, and stifle the sighs and groans that return every moment, to interrupt their profane smiles, and carnal pastimes. For this reason our Saviour compares riches to thorns; and, in truth, they prick and gall, not the hands, but the heart and bowels of such as embrace them too eagerly, and place their affections upon them. It may also be said, that they are like lions and bears; for they are not to be caught without much difficulty, and it is still more troublesome to keep them and to guard against the bite of their venomous and deadly teeth. If you had but once experienced the horrible disquiets, the acute sorrows, the secret fears, and the tormenting cares that attend upon the most glorious sceptres, and the richest crowns, you would judge that it was not without reason that a great prince cried out heretofore, *O crown! if any one but knew thy weight, he would never take thee up from the ground.* The greatest part of the pleasures and satisfactions of this world are merely imaginary, and all its grandeurs like the wind that passeth. The royal prophet inculcates this truth with much elegance, when he saith, Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Surely every man walketh in a vain show: surely they are disquieted in vain, Psal. xxxix. 5, 6. Solomon, the wisest of all kings, and the richest and most magnificent prince of his age, had refused nothing to his eyes, nor to his desires; he had tasted of all the pleasures and delights that can be imagined; but after all, he found in them so little satisfaction and solid content, that he was forced to acknowledge, *That all things under the sun are but vanity and vexation of spirit,* Eccles. iv.

12. Above all things, if our possessions have been wrongfully got, as Balaam's reward, Numb. xxii; Achan's wedge of gold and Babylonish garment, Josh. vii.; Gehazi's changes of raiment, 2 Kings v.; Ahab and Jezebel's vineyard, 1 Kings xxi.; and Judas's thirty pieces of silver, Matt. xxvii.; they will be so far from bringing any real content or peace to the soul, that they will fill our consciences with unspeakable horrors, and with a most dreadful despair. If the voluptuous worldling, who hath enriched himself by rapine, usury and extortion, was to wring those sumptuous garments wherewith he clothes his pride, there would stream

out before his eyes the tears of the poor whom he hath afflicted. If he did but relish, as he ought, the liquor that he drinks out of his cups of jasper and chrystal, he would find, instead of wine and lemonade, that they overflowed with the sweat and blood of the miserable; and if he did but look with attention into the gold and silver dishes that are placed upon his table, he would perceive in them the marrow and bones of such as he hath devoured. Whosoever becomes fat with the substance of the widow and the orphan, shall never open his coffers, but he shall spy there the image of the devil, and the infernal furies; he shall hear the cries and groans of those whom he hath destroyed by his unjust tyranny, and more than savage cruelty. If such escape unpunished here upon earth, they shall not escape the vengeance of heaven. If there is neither sword to strike them, nor fire to consume them, nor leprosy to gnaw them, nor dogs to tear them to pieces, nor halter to strangle them; yet they have a conscience, which will witness against them, and will be their judge, their rack, their wheel and their executioner; nor is the day far off, when they must go to be tormented in the place prepared for them, *where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched*, Mark ix. 44.

13. It is possible to be very indigent in the midst of a rich abundance. This the poets have represented unto us by the fiction of a man thirsting in a river, the water whereof reached up to his chin. A covetous person is like the poor man in the gospel, who had a withered hand, Luke vi. He may also be compared to the barren fig tree, cursed by our Saviour Jesus Christ, that brought forth no fruit for others, and withered away for want of nourishment, Matt. xxi. A contented poverty is of more worth than many riches with discontent. Nature is satisfied with a little, piety with less; but covetousness hath no bounds. The Heathens themselves acknowledged, that he was the richest who had the fewest desires: for the more things you covet, the more are wanting to you. It matters not at all whether the cup which is presented to you be of gold or earth, so there is liquor enough in it to quench your thirst. I would rather drink of a little clear stream, than out of a great river, whose water is troubled. A small quantity of ground is sufficient to nourish a man during this life; but less is required to cover him when he is dead, a little money suffices to subsist honestly in the fear of God; but less is necessary to die in peace in the favour of our Redeemer. The great kings and emperors have but one body to feed and clothe, as well as the meanest

of their subjects. They who enjoy the largest portion in this world, commonly use, or rather abuse, the most of any, the things that they possess. Therefore, instead of envying the rich worldling's opulency, let us meditate upon St Paul's excellent saying, *Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content*, 1 Tim. vi. 8; and let us engrave in the bottom of our hearts this other valuable sentence, *Godliness with contentment is great gain*, ver. 6.

14. Christian souls cast your eyes upon all the things in this world that are the most highly esteemed, and you shall find that their possession is very uncertain and of short continuance; for riches make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle towards heaven, Prov. xxiii. 5. All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the field, Isa. xl. 6.; 1 Pet. i. 24. The world passeth away and the lust thereof, 1 John ii. 17. There needs but the sacking of a town, the bankruptcy of a merchant, or an unsuccessful suit at law to bring thee to poverty. A little spark of fire is able to reduce all thy possessions into ashes, and to make thee a beggar. The least frown can cover thy face with shame and confusion, and cast thee down from the highest pitch of honour and human glory, into the lowest abyss of ignominy and disgrace. The wise man tells us, *He that trusteth in his riches shall fall*, Prov. xi. 28. We may say the same of those who rely upon great men's favour; for it is like a broken reed that pierces the hand of such as lean upon it, Isa. xxxvi. There is nothing here below so constant as inconstancy. If the earth did not often change its face, it would be no longer earth; and if the world was not inconstant, it would cease to be the world. Therefore it is no wonder if the Heathens, who were not acquainted with the wise providence of God, that governs the universe, and brings light out of darkness, have represented fortune blind, mounted on a wheel, which tumbles down again in an instant. How many persons do we see reduced on a sudden to beggary, who a little before abounded in riches, and all manner of plenty? How many are cast down into the dust, and become the scoff of the world, who not long since were raised to the highest honours, and the most glorious dignities? How many fall into the contempt and derision of the vulgar, whose praises were once exalted to the skies? In a word, how many do we see dragged through the streets, shut up in a prison, and brought out to the scaffold, and the gibbet, who were once the glory of the world, the admiration of the people, and the scourge of the worthy men? When we run over in our

minds all the sudden and unexpected changes that we have seen in our days, they seem to us as so many dreams and illusions. It is the vanity and inconstancy of this shadow that flies, which St Paul represents unto us, to wean our hearts and affections from the world. The time, saith he, is short: "It remaineth, that both they that have wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away," 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, 31. Because of this uncertainty of all the advantages of this world, the same great apostle invites us to think upon the everlasting treasures of the life to come. Charge them, saith he, that are rich in this world, not to trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life, 1 Tim. vi. 17—19. For the same reason, likewise, the Son of God advises us, Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal, Matt. iv. 19, 20. A wise Persian seems to have been favoured with a ray of this divine truth, when he left this admirable lesson to posterity. The world is constant to no man; my brother, give thy heart to the great Creator of the world, and that shall suffice thee.

15. If the honours and riches of this world leave us not during this life, or if they are not taken from us by violence, it is certain, that death will deprive us of all, and will separate us from them for ever. For when a man dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him into the sepulchre, Psal. xlix. 17. We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out, 1 Tim. vi. 7. Kings and the greatest princes may say, as well as the meanest soldier of fortune, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither, Job i. 21. All their treasures, riches, sceptres and crowns, can advantage them nothing after their decease. What was Nebuchadnezzar the better for having had an infinite number of people within his dominions? They could not hinder him from lying down on a bed of worms, nor from being eaten by vermin, Isa. xiv. To what purpose did the rich glutton abound with an ocean of riches during his life? After his death he could not so much as obtain a drop of

water to cool his tongue, Luke xvi. The author of the Book of Wisdom had entered into this meditation, where he represents the children of this world as making many fruitless lamentations for their former follies, and voluntary blindness: What hath pride profited us? Or what profit hath the pomp of riches brought us? All those things are passed away like a shadow, and as a post that passes by; as a ship that passeth over the waves of the water, which when it is gone by, the trace thereof cannot be found, neither the path of it in the floods, chap. v. 8, 9, 10. Our heirs give us nothing of all our substance but a winding sheet, a few boards, or perhaps some pounds of lead, and all these consume with us, and in time rot in our graves. In short, we must not only leave all our honours, dignities, treasures and riches, but we must also quit this body, this flesh, these bones, and this skin which covers them. O man! remember, that dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return, Gen. iii. 19.

16. Saladin, the renowned Sultan of Egypt, hath left to posterity an illustrious testimony of this vanity of riches and worldly grandeur. For when he lay upon his death bed, he commanded that the winding-sheet in which he was to be buried, should be carried publicly at the end of a lance, by a herald, who proclaimed with a loud voice, "Behold here is all that this great monarch carries away of all the treasures, glory, principalities and lordships which he possessed in the world."

17. What is still more afflicting, we know not who shall inherit the fruits of all our labours, which we possess with so much fear and restless avarice. Perhaps our greatest enemies, or, which is still worse, the enemies of God, shall clothe themselves with our spoils; and that which we have been gathering together for many years shall be squandered in a moment. Of this vanity and evil the royal Prophet complains in the 39th Psalm. Surely every man walketh in a vain show: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.

18. Consider well, O Christian! the dangerous effects that are wrought in us by the love of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches. This passion chokes in our hearts the good seed of the gospel, Matt. xiii., and hinders it from growing up to salvation. It keeps many from glorifying God, and making an open profession of his truth; as it is said of some of the chief Pharisees, that they believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, but would not confess him before men, because

they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God, John xii. Hence it came to pass, that when Cyrus made proclamation, that the children of Israel should have leave to return into their own country, to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple, and to re-establish the service of Almighty God, there were many Jews who shut both their ears and hearts to this wise prince's voice, and God's call; the reason of which was, because they had taken too much pains to establish themselves at Babylon, were too deeply rooted there, and were too much wedded to the pleasures and delights of the place. For the same cause, likewise, the young man in the gospel, of whom mention has been already made, would not follow the Saviour of the world, nor obey his command, because he had so much riches, and had settled his heart and affections upon them. As the ark of the covenant, and Dagon, the idol of the Philistines, could not dwell together under one roof, 1 Sam. v; so the love of God and the love of the world are absolutely incompatible. Wherefore St John exhorts us, love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him, 1 John ii. 15.

19. It is this passion that stops so many at their first setting out in the paths of piety. For as Lot's wife was changed into a pillar of salt as soon as she had looked behind her, Gen. xix. 26; so when God sends his holy angels to take us by the hand and drag us out of the spiritual Sodom, there is nothing more dangerous than to look back with regret after the worldly advantages and delights which we are then entirely to abandon. That alone is able to stop us in our course, to quench our zeal, and to cause all our pious resolutions to vanish. Wherefore we ought to engrave in letters of gold this excellent sentence of our blessed Saviour, *No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God*, Luke ix. 62.

20. Hence it likewise comes to pass, that so many persons, esteemed the best grounded in religion and piety, turn their backs upon God, and make shipwreck of their faith. What was the reason why the children of Israel murmured so often, and desired to return into Egypt? Was it not, as we have already remarked, because their hearts and affections were rooted to that unhappy land, from whence God had delivered them by so many miracles? And wherefore did Demas leave St Paul and the gospel of Christ? It was *because he loved this present world*, 2 Tim. iv. 10. In short,

our own experience confirms to us every day the precious saying of our Saviour, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon," Matt. vi. 24.

21. If the riches and honours of the world happen not to work in ourselves these fatal and lamentable effects, they often produce them in our posterity. Many would live happier in the world, and be worthier men, if their parents had left them less wealth, and in a humbler rank. Their riches and honours occasion them innumerable evils, and oftentimes plunge them into the grossest and most insolent debaucheries. It is that which puffs them up with a ridiculous vanity, and an insupportable pride, that renders them hateful both to God and man. In a word, it is that which makes them forget God; and the unspeakable treasures of his kingdom. Wherefore Agur offers up this excellent prayer unto God, "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? Or lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain," Prov. xxx. 8, 9. Wretched man! to what purpose dost thou torment thyself, and take so much pains to heap up riches for thy children? Perhaps those very riches which thou tearest from others, or which thou acquirest with the loss of thy soul, shall serve to make *golden calves*, Exod. xxxii. and be the substance of abominable idols, Jud. xvii. As Gideon's gold which he took from the Midianites, was employed to make an Ephod, which *became a snare to his house and to all Israel.* So it happens many times, that the goods which we get with the expense of so much blood and sweat, and the honours unto which we climb with so much toil and eager passion, become a snare to our posterity, and cast them headlong into an abyss of misery.

22. We must not forget that death is a kind of sleep; wherefore, in holy scripture, to die and to fall asleep are frequently to be understood in the same sense. Now as we find by experience, that we cannot fall asleep, unless we first banish from our pillow all thoughts of our worldly affairs; so it is altogether impossible for us to die comfortably, and in peace, unless we banish betimes from our hearts and affections all the foolish thoughts that disquiet us, and all the corroding cares that undermine and prey upon us.

23. To this purpose, we read in profane history, that when Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, had prepared a powerful army to

march against the Romans, one of his chief counsellors, named Cyneas, spake to him in the following manner: *Sir, if it please God to grant us the victory over the Romans, what use shall we make of it?* The king answered, we will endeavour to conquer the rest of Italy; and when we shall have conquered Italy, replied Cyneas, How shall we employ ourselves next? We will then subdue Sicily, said the king. The prudent Cyneas continued to demand. And when we shall have subdued Sicily, what shall we do? Pyrrhus answered, We will pass over into Africa and take Carthage; and after that we may recover Macedonia, and give law to all Greece, without control. But, sir, replied Cyneas, when we shall get all into our possession, what shall we do then? The king answered with a smile, my friend, we will then repose ourselves, and spend our days in ease and pleasure. And what hinders us now, sir, from reposing ourselves, and taking our ease and pleasure, said this faithful minister to his prince, since we have already in our hands that which we are going to seek so far, with so much bloodshed and danger? We may apply this to ourselves; for we have, most of us, a long series of dependent designs, which cannot be accomplished during the lives of several men. We tremble, as if death had already caught us by the throat; and yet we have many desires to fulfil, as if we were immortal. We build and adorn our dwellings, as if we were never to leave them; and we may make as much provision as if we had the charge of a royal army. Let us therefore imitate the wise and prudent Cyneas; let us ask ourselves, for what purpose are these mighty designs? What end we propose to ourselves of all our labours, cares and watchings? What we aim at when we run through so many dangers, and endure so many inconveniences? Our souls, without doubt, will answer us, that it is with an intent to repose ourselves at last, to live at ease, and enjoy the fruits of our labour. If so, let us seize the present hour to enjoy that happiness and satisfaction, and not stay till death shall stretch us in our graves. Let us be contented with the goods that God hath already bestowed upon us, and use them with thanksgiving. Miserable wretches that we are! why do we labour and torment ourselves for so many things, seeing there is only one thing needful, and that is piety, the fear of God, and the expectation of his eternal joys! Let us therefore choose that good part, which shall never be taken from us, Luke. x. 42.

24. If we desire to imprint still deeper in our minds a contempt of the world and its vanities, we must often medi-

tate with a pious attention, upon the excellency of our nature, sanctified by grace, upon the dignity of our spiritual calling, and upon the riches and glory of that everlasting happiness which God hath reserved for us in heaven. It is impossible to think upon these things as we ought: but we must conclude with the apostle, that *the world*, with all its treasures and delights *is not worthy of us*, Heb. xi. The woman that appeared to St John in a vision was clothed with the sun, and the moon was under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars, Rev. xii. 1. This is a lively image of the Church of Christ in general, and of every faithful member in particular; for when we are clothed and adorned with Jesus Christ the Son of Righteousness, we should tread under foot all the pomp and magnificence of the world, laugh at its revolutions, and at all the vanities and inconstancy of the earth. We must seek our greatest glory, and our most transporting delights, in the doctrine of the twelve apostles, who are as so many bright stars that shine in the firmament of the church. Let the world change its countenance as the deceitful Laban; we ought to resemble the rays of the sun, and to be always the same: for our glory is not like the glory of the world, and that of the princes of this age, 1 Cor. ii., which comes to nothing. It is not built upon a vain and perishable foundation, but upon the living and true God, *who is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever*, Heb. xiii. 8. *Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God*, Psal. xx. 7.

25. God hath given us an erect countenance, looking up towards heaven, that we might thereby learn to lift up our heart, and send our desires and affections thither. He hath created our souls of a celestial nature, that they may take their flight above all earthly matter. He hath adorned them with immortality, that they may contemn every thing that is perishing and transitory, and not immortal like themselves. In short, seeing God hath prepared for us in heaven, his paradise, his glory, his treasures and his rivers of everlasting joys, how can we debase our affections to the dust of this earth, on which the serpent creeps?

26. Alexander the Great being about to leave Macedonia, to go and conquer the Persian empire, he distributed all his substance to his friends and faithful servants; and when one of his favourites asked him, what he had reserved for himself? He answered that he had reserved hope. In the same manner we ought at all times to be ready to depart out of the world, and to leave our kindred and friends whatsoever we

enjoy. And if our flesh should ask us, what we have kept for ourselves? let us answer with a holy confidence, That we have kept our hope. This answer, I assure you, Christian souls, will be better grounded than that of Alexander to his favourite. For this prince left his royal patrimony without any constraint; but whether we will or not, we must leave the world. Alexander quitted certain possessions for a doubtful hope; but we abandon perishing enjoyments, for a hope more certain and immoveable than heaven and earth. Alexander's expectation regarded only a temporal kingdom, and a short and fading glory; but our expectation is of an incorruptible crown and eternal triumphs. Death, that seized upon Alexander in the flower of his age, put an end to all his victories, and destroyed all his trophies; but we are in hopes to conquer death itself; and this hope will not deceive us. This therefore being our assurance, it is no wonder if the apostle tells us, that *hope is an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the vail*, that is, into heaven, *whither Jesus Christ is entered for us, as our forerunner*, Heb. vi. 19, 20.

27. God hath hid in the earth, gold, silver and precious stones, to teach us to tread under our feet the riches and pomps of the world. But he hath lifted up to the highest heaven, our spiritual treasures, and our immortal crowns, that we may place there our hearts, and most ardent affections. He would have us imitate the prophet David, who during his flight, and the cruel persecutions which he suffered, which had been promised to him, and of which he had received the unction from Samuel. He would have us behave like those true Israelites, who, when they were captives in Babylon, had always their hearts and affections in Jerusalem, and made it the only subject of their joy in the midst of all their sorrows, Psal. cxxxvii. Thus we, who are wandering up and down in this miserable wilderness, and who live in the world as in another Babylon, in a kind of captivity, ought to comfort ourselves, and rejoice in expectation of the heavenly kingdom, which hath been prepared for us from all eternity, and whereof the Holy Spirit is the true unction, which hath confirmed to us the promise, and given the earnest of it. The eye of our faith should be always fixed upon the Jerusalem above, which is the mother of us all, Gal. iv. 26, and the place of our eternal rest. To this the apostle exhorts us in these divine words, *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affec-*

tions on things above, not on things on the earth: for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God, Col. iii. 1, 2, 3.

28. When men are going to reside in another country, where their money is not current, they furnish themselves betimes with bills of exchange, and find the means to receive it in other coin. Therefore, seeing that neither gold, nor silver, nor precious stones will pass current in heaven, the place of our eternal abode, let us send thither betimes all our riches and treasures, as it were by way of bills of exchange; and that we may intrust them in safety, with the assurance of a notable gain, and a lawful usury, let us put them into the hands of God himself, who will restore them to us a hundred fold in his kingdom. Let us distribute them to the poor, who are the members of Christ's mystical body, and this blessed Saviour will reward us as if they had been given to his own person. You that are in so much fear to lose your money, get such purses as will never decay, and *make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations,* Luke xvi. 9.

29. Lastly, as the children of Israel, when they had tasted of the land of Canaan, most ardently desired to enjoy such a noble and delicious country, and their abode in the wilderness became still more tedious and insupportable; so we, who have *the first fruits of the Spirit,* Rom. viii. 23; and the foretaste of paradise, must aspire with all our hearts to the heavenly Canaan, and sigh without ceasing, for its unspeakable delight. All the pleasures of the world should seem insipid to us, and its greatest sweets be turned into bitterness; so that we may often pray with David, *Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation: that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory in thine inheritance,* Psal. cvi. 4, 5.

To conclude this discourse, since *we have here no continuing city, but that we seek for one to come,* Heb. xiii. 14; since we know not the hour when God will please to take us out of the world, to introduce us into his holy Jerusalem, let us take heed to ourselves, *lest at any time our hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and so that day comes upon us unawares,* Luke xxi. 34. And as the apostles left their nets to follow Jesus Christ, Matt. iv.; so let us leave the vain cares,

the groundless fears, and the deceitful hopes, that entangle our souls, that when it shall please God to call us, we may be ready to answer his heavenly call. Let us accustom ourselves betimes to will what God willeth, and to obey him without reluctance. Let us cast all our cares upon God, 2 Pet. v. 7, and rely upon his wise and Fatherly providence. Let us look with contempt upon the world, its vain pomps, and perishable riches; and esteem nothing upon the earth, nor aught that man is able to procure for us, in comparison of the blessed hope which we have in heaven, Tit. ii. 13; and the precious gift which God hath reserved for us, 2 Tim. ii. Let us prefer Job's dunghill and ashes to the proud throne and vast empire of Nebuchadnezzar. Let us esteem the beggary of poor Lazarus, more happy than the wanton abundance of the rich glutton; and let us engrave in our hearts this blessed saying of the Son of God, *What is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?* Luke ix. 25. Let us have always before our eyes the image of that rich worldling, who had heaped up many goods for himself, but was not rich in the sight of God. Let us remember what he said unto his soul, *Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry,* Luke xii. 19; and let what God said unto him sound always in our ears, *Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?* Instead of contriving how to enlarge our barns and granaries, and to increase our revenues and treasures, let us endeavour to set bounds to our desires, and be content with such things as we have, Heb. xiii. 5. Seeing we have but a breath in our nostrils, and that we are clothed with a mortal body, let us not entertain such distant designs, nor suffer our covetings to be immortal. Let us always, and in every place, be ready to put an end to our labours, and to lay the last stone on our building; or rather, let us be always in a disposition to loose the bands of this earthly tabernacle. Let us willingly break all the ties that attach us to this miserable world, that when death comes, it may have nothing to do but cut the last string, by which our soul is naturally united to this languishing body. Let our affections take root in heaven, *that where our treasure is, our hearts may be there also,* Matt. vi. 21. Let us not slumber with the foolish virgins, Matt. xxv; but having our loins girded about, and our lights burning, Luke xii. 35, let us be prepared at every moment, to go to meet our heavenly Spouse, and follow him

into the marriage-chamber. Let us be like a ship at anchor, ready to sail with the first fair wind; or as a soldier, completely armed, that only waits for the day of battle, and holds himself always in readiness to mount his horse, that he may march into the field at the first sound of the trumpet. Let us send betimes all our most precious jewels into the most glorious palace of eternity, that our bag and baggage being already gone, we may have nothing to do but to take our last farewell. If any consideration of flesh and blood stops us, let us break asunder all these bands by the strength of Christ, the Captain of our salvation, our Nazarenism; that is to say, by the virtue of God's Holy Spirit, which he hath been graciously pleased to vouchsafe us. And if the persons whom we love and cherish the most tenderly, or even those to whom we esteem the most, or those to whom we owe the greatest reverence and honour, should labour to estrange our affections, and deliver us from our holy resolution, by mean and earthly considerations, let us say to them, in the words of our Saviour to Mary Magdalen, *Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father*, John xx. 17. Stop not my course, for I have already hold of the prize, the promised crown. In short, as the father of the faithful loosed the ram, whose horns were caught in a thicket, and offered it up for a burnt-offering unto God, Gen xxii; so let us free our minds from all worldly cares and carnal affections; let us offer them up to God a burnt-offering of a sweet smelling savour, as a *holy and living sacrifice*, Rom. xii. 1; which burns in the ardent flames of zeal and charity, yet is never consumed.

When the Christian is thus prepared, he will not fear death, but will say to it with an assured countenance,—Come when thou wilt, O death, I desire no delay, for it is a long time since I have settled all my affairs, and have waited for thee with intrepidity. The principal part of myself is not here below; my heart is already ravished into heaven, where God expects me with open arms. Therefore, notwithstanding the fearful darkness that surrounds me, and the design that thou hast to destroy me, I will follow thee as courageously, and with as much joy, as St Peter did the angel of light that threw open before him the gates of his prison, Acts xii.

IX.

Prayer and Meditation for such as prepare themselves for death, by renouncing the world.

O Almighty God, the Lord of heaven and earth, who dealest out good and evil with a divine foresight, and admirable wisdom! thou hast not permitted us to have here a continuing city, that we may seek for that which is to come. Thou hast set before our eyes the vanity and inconstancy of all things under the sun, that we may aspire to attain more solid and durable advantages. Thou hast placed and reserved in heaven inexhaustible treasures, incorruptible crowns of glory, and eternal triumphs, that we might transport thither our hearts and affections. The fountain of everlasting joys is with thee, that we may always thirst after the mighty and living God; and that we may desire, with a holy earnestness, to look upon thy beautiful and glorious face, O adorable Creator! seeing thou hast given me an immortal soul, suffer me not to be so wretched, as to grovel in the dust of this miserable earth, or to plunge myself into the filth of its abominable pleasures. Give me grace to renounce the world and all its vanities; and grant that I may possess all these decaying and perishable goods, as not possessing them; that I may trample upon all the pomp and glory of the age; that I may remember the gold, silver and precious stones, whose outward beauty dazzles the carnal eye of man, are nothing else but a little concrete earth, that must again be dissolved into dust; and that I may never forget, that after my decease, all these things will profit me no more, than the earth and stones which shall cover my dead corpse, or the wood or lead which shall serve for a coffin. Give me grace to despise all the honours and dignities, after which the men of this world hunt so impatiently; for the fashion of them passeth away, and they are even as a shadow that flieth. Pluck out of my heart all the cares of this life, and all worldly solicitudes, that death may not surprise me unprepared, and that there may be nothing to stop or hinder me from going to thee, whenever thou shalt be pleased to call me; that my soul being wholly disentangled and freed from these briars and thorns, I may be ready at every moment to offer it up to thee, a living and holy sacrifice. As thy chosen people Israel pitched their tents, or removed their camps, just according to thy command, so give me grace to be equally disposed either

to live or die, to remain in this tabernacle or depart from it. And as this people passed over the river Jordan with a wonderful joy, to take possession of the promised land; grant that I may also leave this miserable wilderness with transports of delight, to enter into the celestial Canaan, which flows with the milk and honey of divine pleasure and everlasting consolation. O God, who art the portion of mine inheritance, number me not with the men of this world, whose portion is in this life. Thou satisfiest their appetite with thy good things, so that they are full, and leave sufficient for their posterity; but as for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness, and shall be satisfied with thy likeness, when I awake at the sound of the last trumpet. *Amen.*

CHAPTER XI.

The fifth remedy against the Fears of Death, is, to forsake vice, and to apply ourselves to the practice of true piety and holiness.

God is so wonderful in all his works, and disposes of his creatures in such a manner, that he forces from his very enemies the acknowledgment of his truth. You have an excellent example of this in the person of Balaam, who, beholding the tents of the children of Israel, was constrained to break out into this passionate wish, *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his,* Numb. xxiii. 10. Although he was a wicked wretch, who loved the wages of iniquity, nevertheless he perceived, by that prophetic light with which his understanding was enlightened, how sweet and comfortable death was to such as addicted themselves, during this life, to the service and fear of the Almighty God; and how different it is from the death of the profane and worldly-minded, who abandon themselves to their lusts, and love to wallow in the ordure of their lawless and abominable delights. For as the sleep of a drunkard is restless and unquiet, so those who have made themselves drunk with the filthy pleasures of this life, if they be not altogether Atheists, commonly depart out of the world in great agonies of mind, and such horrors upon the conscience as cannot be expressed. On the contrary, as the handicrafts-

man, who hath worked all the day in his shop, or as the husbandman who hath wearied himself in following the plough, lays himself down at night, and sleeps sweetly, and in peace; so the good Christian, who during this life hath carefully attended the works of piety and mercy, falls into his last sleep with great quiet of mind and serenity of soul. As the Patriarch Jacob, whose life was unblamable, when he travelled a journey at his father's command, was not disturbed to see the sun go down, though he was alone in the midst of a vast plain, but laid him down in peace, and slept sweetly, having no other bed but the earth, no other pillow but a stone, no other covering but the heavens, nor any other curtains than the dark shadows of the night, Gen. xxviii. In the same manner, a man sanctified by the Spirit of God, who walks in all the commands of his heavenly Father, shall never be afraid. For wheresoever his sun goes down, wheresoever death arrests him, he will look upon himself as another Bethel. He will sleep quietly in the Lord Jesus; and even in the most cruel death, will feel a *joy unspeakable and full of glory*, 1 Pet. i. 8, with *the peace of God, which passeth all understanding*, Phil. iv. 7.

We have an instance of this in St Paul: *He had lived in all good conscience before God and before men*, Acts xxiii. 1; *and had laboured more abundantly in the ministry than all the other apostles*, 1 Cor. xv. 10. Therefore he stood in no fear of death: nay, so far is he from being afraid or apprehensive of it, that he hopes and wishes for it, as the passage into glory and eternal felicity. The same is likewise no less observable in St Stephen, the first martyr of Jesus Christ; for in the midst of the most grievous torments, he had a countenance shining like that of an angel, Acts. vi. 15; which was a certain testimony of the inward peace of his conscience, and the extraordinary joy of his soul; for, as the wise man informs us, *A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance*, Prov. xv. 13. From the same fountain is derived this other oracle, that foretells, in general, what shall happen to every particular, *The wicked is driven away in his wickedness; but the righteous hath hope in his death*, Prov. xiv. 32. To which agrees this excellent saying of Jesus, the son of Sirach, "Whoso feareth the Lord, it shall go well with him at the last, and he shall find favour in the day of his death," Eccl. i. 13. This life is but a moment, that soon flieth away; yet it determines our eternal state. It either raises us to the glory of heaven, or casts us headlong into the abyss of eternal misery; for whatsoever a man sow-

eth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting, Gal. vi. 7, 8.

If you are afraid of a cruel and unfortunate death, keep yourselves from an evil and profane life: for commonly as a man's life is, so is his death. Most of those who delight to live in filthy lusts and impiety, depart with hardened hearts, or in despair. God's patience wearied out, kindles into a just fury; and we see, that God leaves those at the hours of death, who have left him in the course of their lives. He is deaf to the cries and groans of such as have shut their ears and hearts to his holy word, and his fatherly admonitions. He laughs at the amazing horrors, and exquisite torments of those who trample upon his sacred commands; as he himself tells us in the following words, which, like so many thunders, are capable of overturning mountains, and rending rocks asunder: Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all my counsels, and would none of my reproofs; I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh, Prov. i. 24, 25, 26.

King Ahab desired to hear a grateful prophecy of victory over the Syrians; nevertheless he continued in his impieties and tyranny: therefore the prophet Micaiah, without standing in fear of his displeasure, boldly threatens him with the just judgment of God which hung over his guilty head, 1 Kings xxii. In the same manner, some sinners desire to be flattered; and notwithstanding they persist in their crimes, expect from us nothing but predictions of joy and triumph. But we should be false prophets, possessed with a lying spirit, if we did not foretell to such people that a most lamentable and miserable death will befall them. Our charity for them would be very cruel if we did not endeavour to save them with fear, pulling them out of the fire, Jude 23. If we did not show them hell opening its jaws, and the eternal torments wherewith God, in his just wrath, punishes impenitent and hardened sinners: *Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuaded men*, 2 Cor. v. 11. For if we fail in this duty, *their blood will be required at our hands*, Ezek. xxxiii.

It was in vain that the Heathen philosophers discoursed so learnedly concerning the shortness of life; and to as little purpose were those mementos of mortality so highly affected by many of their princes. They were only vagrant thoughts, barren of any benefit, seeing they could not prevail upon

them to reform their lives, and by consequence to prepare for a happy death. It was likewise in vain that Balaam so passionately desired to *die the death of the righteous, and that his last end might be like his*, Numb. xxiii. 10; seeing he still lived the life of a sinner, and continued in the congregation of idolaters; therefore he died with them, and was involved in their punishment, Numb. xxxi. 8. As he was a partner in their crimes, it was but just and reasonable that he should share in their calamity, and be a partaker of their sufferings.

To forsake vice and sin, is to spoil death of its venom, and all its fiery darts. It is to disarm this furious beast of its teeth and claws. It is to break the cords and chains, by which the devil drags us into perdition. It is to strangle the monsters that affright us, and the furies that haunt us. In short, it is to change hell and its torments into a paradise of delights. There never was any person yet that led a holy and religious life, but he died happily in the favour of God. Now that the Lord knocketh, open unto him the doors of your hearts, and at the hour of your death, he will open unto you the gates of heaven. Present him, during this life, with your souls and bodies, and he will accept the gift and set his own seal upon it. Here below, he will enrich you with his graces, and crown you in heaven with his glory. *Blessed are the dead, which die in the Lord*, Rev. xiv. 13; but to die in the Lord, we must live to the Lord, that we may be able to say with the apostle, *Whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: Whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's*, Rom. xiv. 8.

To excite us to this religious duty, we must consider, in the first place, the command which God gives us to love him, to fear him, to repent of our sins, and to walk in his holy laws. Unto this he exhorts us in all the writings of the Old Testament; as in Deuteronomy vi. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. In the 2nd Psalm, Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. In the 8th chapter of Isaiah, Sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself, and let him be your fear and dread. And in chap. lv., Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. In the 2nd chapter of the prophet Joel, Turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping,

and with mourning. And in the 1st chapter of Malachi, A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear?

2. Jesus Christ did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it; therefore in the New Testament, we have no less frequent exhortations to the practice of piety and virtue. As in the 5th chapter of St Matthew, Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. And in the 1st chapter of St Mark, Repent ye, and believe the gospel. The apostle St Paul, in the 12th of the Romans, has these divine words: I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good. And in the 13th chapter, Walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. In 1 Cor. xv., Awake to righteousness, and sin not. In Eph. iv., Put ye off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and put ye on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. In Col. iii., Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry. In the 5th chapter of the first epistle to the Thessalonians, Watch and be sober: abstain from all appearance of evil. And in the 4th chapter of the Philippians, Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. I might with as much ease count the stars of the sky, as reckon up all the passages in Scripture that exhorts to a holy life.

3. God not only commands us to labour after holiness, justice and innocency of life; but he proposes himself for our example, that as obedient children delight to copy their father's virtues, so we may endeavour to imitate in our lives the divine perfections of our heavenly Father, and re-engrave in

our hearts his sacred image. It is this glorious pattern which he sets before us in the 11th chapter of Leviticus, *Be ye holy, for I am holy:* as does St Peter, reciting this very passage, *As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.* Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ gives us the same lesson: "Love, says he, your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you: that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." And the apostle St Paul, writing to the Ephesians, recommends the same model to us in these divine words: "Be ye followers of God, as dear children," chap. v. 1. Put ye off the old man, and put ye on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. And in Col. iii., Now put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.

4. Let us meditate with attention upon the excellent and precious promises that God hath made to such as addict themselves to piety and good works. As in the 20th chapter of Exodus, "I show mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments." And 1 Sam. ii., Them that honour me, I will honour. And in Isa. iii., Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with them; for they shall eat of the fruit of their doings. In Matthew v., Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. And in chap. vi., Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. And in chap. vii., Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven. St Paul speaks thus to the Romans: "If ye through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live," chap. viii. 13. And in the 1st epistle to Timothy, "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." And in the 20th chapter of the Revelations, it is written, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death shall have no power."

5. Let the earth hear and tremble at the terrible judgment

which God hath denounced against all impenitent sinners; as in Exod. xx., I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me. In the 2d chapter of the first book of Samuel, Them that honour me, I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. In the 12th chapter of St Matthew, Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. In the 3d of St John, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, that is to say, of a spirit purifying like water, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. In Rom. viii., They that are in the flesh cannot please God. And in the 6th chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor idolaters, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. The apostle to the Hebrews is not content to tell us, That without holiness no man shall see the Lord, chap. xii. 14; for he says, farther, That if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries, chap. x. 26, 27. For God is a consuming fire, chap. xii. 29. And in the Revelations, it is not only said, that there shall in no wise enter into the holy Jerusalem any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, chap. xxi. 27; and that God will shut out of it all dogs and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie, chap. xxii. 15. But the Holy Spirit likewise assures us, that the fearful, that is to say, such as are more afraid of man than of God, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death, chap. xxi. 8.

6. Though we should speak with the tongues of angels, though we should bestow all our goods to feed the poor, and though we should give our bodies to be burned, if we have not charity, we are become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal, 1 Cor. xiii. Though we should be able to work signs and wonders, if we are not clothed with holiness and innocency of life; if we are not adorned with meekness and love, Christ will say unto us, as to the foolish virgins, *I know you not*, Matt. xxv. 12. Though we could, with Ju-

das, cast the devil out of other men, it would avail us nothing, unless we cast him out of our own hearts, with all the wicked lusts that he fosters there. Such shall cry out in vain at the last day; Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? Jesus Christ will return them this dreadful answer, *Depart from me ye that work iniquity*, Matt. vii. 22, 23.

7. Consider, that whatever be your portion of the good things of this life, or whatever worldly advantages you enjoy, when you come to die, you shall carry away neither your riches, honours, nor your pleasures. But if you are rich in faith and good works, if you are clothed with holiness, and crowned with righteousness; if all your joy and satisfaction consists in the service of God, and the exercise of piety, you shall carry away out of the world this spiritual treasure, this celestial glory, and these angelical delights. It is what the Holy Spirit teaches us, where it says, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord; for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them, Rev. xiv. 13.

8. Let us have always before our eyes the blessed examples of so many holy persons, who have traced out for us the way to heaven, and who, by their piety and good works, are arrived at the paradise of God, and the glory of his kingdom. It is reported of a famous ancient painter, that when he was about to draw an accomplished beauty, he borrowed from divers objects the graces and excellencies with which he designed to adorn his piece. From one he took the whiteness of the lily, from another the glowing blush of the rose, from this the lightning of the eye, and from that the coral of the lips, and so of the other parts. In the same manner, to renew in our souls the image of God, defaced by sin, we should imitate the virtues and excellencies of the best and most holy men. For example, we should always represent to ourselves Abel's innocency, Enoch's holy life, Noah's righteousness, Abraham's faith, Lot's hospitality, Isaac's obedience, the fidelity of Jacob, the chastity of Joseph, the patience of Job, the meekness of Moses, the zeal of Phineas, the constancy of David, the wisdom of Solomon, the piety of Josiah, the prayers of Daniel, the tears of Jeremiah, the fasting of Esther, the holy earnestness of the Canaanitish woman, the devotion of Cornelius, the charity of the good Samaritan, the alms of Dorcas and of the poor widow, the Publican's humility, the good thief's repentance, the tears of Mary Magdalen, the bitter weeping of St Peter, the heroic courage and indefatigable labours of St Paul, and the glorious martyrdom of

St Stephen, and of so many renowned persons of all ages and sexes, who have gone to the torture with as much joy as to a feast or a triumph, and who have sealed with their blood the truth of the gospel of the Son of God, *Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us run with patience the race that is set before us*, Heb. xii. 1.

9. Above all things let us look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith: for he hath left us an example that we should follow his steps, 1 Pet. ii. 21. All the virtues that are dispersed in the souls of God's people are but so many faint rays of the Son of Righteousness, and a weak image of his glory. There is no flame here below so perfect, but yields a smoke; nor any righteousness so accomplished, but hath its defects. While we are clothed with the infirmities of flesh and blood, the garment of the most innocent is soiled and spotted; but our Lord and Saviour is the Lamb without blemish and without spot, 1 Pet. i. 19; neither was guile found in his mouth, 1 Pet. ii. 22. *For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners*, Heb. vii. 26. The perfect image of every virtue was never found in any mortal man; but Jesus Christ is fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into his lips, Psal. xlv. 2. In him alone we have a complete model of all virtues, and all imaginable perfections. Therefore, when the apostle had exhorted the Romans to renounce the lusts of the flesh, drunkenness, anger, envy, and all kinds of sin, instead of enumerating the contrary virtues, he thinks it sufficient to sum up the whole in this short but divine sentence, *Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ*, Rom. xiii. 14; to teach us, that all the virtues and graces only meet in the sacred person of our blessed Saviour, in their highest degree of perfection.

10. We are the more obliged to imitate Jesus Christ, and to engrave his holy image in our hearts, because he is not only our Father, our Lord and our King, but he is likewise the blessed head of that body whereof we are members. Now it is not reasonable that defiled and profane members should be joined to a head so holy and glorious. Therefore, whoever gives himself over to sin, and delights in vice and corruption, maims as much as in him lies, the sacred body of the Son of God. It was this consideration which drew from the holy apostle this pathetic expression, *Shall I take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot?* 1 Cor. vi. 15.

11. The Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts, is also a

great obligation to a pious life. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 1 Cor. iii. 16. Shall we dare then to discover our filthy and unclean thoughts in the presence of so Holy and Divine a Guest? Shall we be so bold as to erect upon his altar the idols of jealousy, which provoke him to jealousy? Ezek. viii. 3. He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, Hab. i. 13. It is the only thing in the world that afflicts and grieves him. Therefore when St Paul had exhorted the Ephesians, Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers; he adds, And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption, chap. iv. 29, 30. And if there be any one who is not awed at the presence of so glorious a person, let him tremble at this dreadful threatening, *If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy*, 1 Cor. iii. 17.

12. There were two tables of stone in the ark of the covenant, whereon God himself had written his law, which he gave to his people by the ministry of Moses, 1 Kings viii. 9. Since, therefore, the God of all mercies hath chosen thy soul to be his sanctuary, and the pavilion of his glory, his sacred commandments must be written upon the tables of thine heart, Prov. vii. 3; and thou must be inflamed with an earnest desire for his service, and an exact conformity to his holy will; that we may be able to say to you, what St Paul said to the faithful in his days, Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, written, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart, 2 Cor. iii. 3; and that thou mayest say with the royal Prophet, *I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is written in my heart*, Psal. xl. 8.

13. Let us represent to ourselves continually the great and endless obligations that we have to love God, to fear him and to serve him. He is the most perfect of all beings, sovereignly good, and infinitely amiable; so that if there were neither hell to punish, nor heaven to reward us, he ought to be served and adored, because of himself and his divine perfections. It was this transporting consideration which caused the prophet to break forth in these lofty expressions, *Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for to thee doth it appertain: forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto thee*, Jer. x. 7.

14. Whilst we are sojourners here below, we are not

capable of such an exalted and heavenly meditation. It belongs only to the angels whom God hath clothed with light and glory; and to those happy spirits whom he hath admitted to the contemplation of his face. Let us therefore turn our thoughts to those blessings and favours which we have received from this great God, who hath created us in his own image, and hath been pleased to make us the master-piece of all his inferior wonders. He hath placed, and, as it were, summed up in us, all the graces and perfections which he hath dispersed through the universe. He hath given us a being, as to the sun, moon and stars; a life, as to the plants; sense, as to the animals; and an understanding, as to the angels. In short, he hath breathed into this body, fashioned with his own fingers, an immortal soul of a heavenly substance, a ray of his glory, and a living image of his godhead. "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits," Psal. ciii. 1, 2.

15. It is for man's sake that God hath stretched out the heavens, laid the foundations of the earth, poured out the waters and set bounds to the raging sea. For man's sake it is that this bounteous Creator hath set the firmament so thick with luminous stars; hath appointed the inconstant moon its course, and endued it with such wonderful influences; hath placed in the sun such an inexhaustible source of light, and hath established the invariable succession of the seasons, the days, the months, and the years. For man's use and innocent recreation it is, that so many birds sing and fly in the open air; that such prodigious numbers of fish swim in the seas and rivers; that the earth is enamelled with so many beauteous flowers, brings forth so many wholesome herbs and pleasant fruits, feeds so many kinds of animals, and engenders in its bowels, gold, silver and precious stones. In short, for man's sake it is that God hath created the world, filled it full of so many riches, and adorned it with so many rare perfections. Therefore it is not without reason that the royal prophet, transported with admiration, cries out, "O God! what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet. All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air and the fish of the sea," Psal. viii. 1, &c. If the example of this great prophet has not sufficient influence to

excite and persuade you to the fear and worship of God, by the consideration of the wonderful works of the creation; hear the voice and exhortation of the angel that took his flight through the midst of heaven with the everlasting gospel in his hand, "Fear God, and give glory to him that liveth for ever and ever: and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of water," Rev. xiv. 7.

16. We not only live, move, and have our being in God; but he hath never left himself without a witness of it, doing good, and giving us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness, Acts xiv. 17. He feeds us with manna, and gives us to drink of his abundance. He overshadows us with his protecting clouds, and enlightens us with his heavenly fire. He hath his eyes always open to our misfortunes, and his ears to our sighs and groans. He is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth, Psal. cxlv. 18. Therefore let us say with the man after God's own heart, "I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications; because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live," Psal. cxvi. 1, 2.

17. Besides the advantages which thou enjoyest in common with the rest of God's children, meditate often upon those blessings and favours which he hath vouchsafed to thee in particular. Remember how often he hath sent thee his succour from above, and how many times he hath delivered thee, as it were, by a miracle from the evils that hung over thy head; how liberal his hand hath been to thee, and what admirable and munificent means he hath employed to crown thee with his most precious favours. Then thou wilt say with the partriarch Jacob, "O God! I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant," Gen. xxxii. 10; and with David, "Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to usward; they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee; if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered," Psal. xl. 5. Being ravished with a holy admiration, thou wilt cry out with the same prophet, "O God, who is like unto thee? Thou, which hast showed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side," Psal. lxxi. 19,

20, 21. And again, "What shall I render unto the Lord, for all his benefits towards me?" Psal. cxvi. 12.

18. The consideration that God hath redeemed us, obliges us in a particular manner to deny ourselves, and to consecrate ourselves to his service. For a slave does not belong to himself, but to him who hath redeemed him and paid his ransom. Thus when God had delivered the children of Israel from their Egyptian bondage, he gave them his laws and ordinances in Mount Sinai. In the same manner God hath redeemed us from the tyranny of the devil, the world, sin, death and hell, and in general from the power of all our enemies, that we might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of our life, Luke i. 74, 75. He hath given him a ransom for us, that we might be unto him a peculiar people, zealous of good works, Tit. ii. 14. Ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's, 1 Cor. vi. 20.

19. One love must light up another. The sacred fire, come down from heaven, must kindle in our hearts an ardent zeal for his glory, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life," John iii. 16. He hath not spared him, who is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, Heb. i. 3; but hath delivered him to death for us, even the ignominious death of the cross, Phil. ii. 8. And is it not reasonable that we should love him above all worldly considerations, a God so good and merciful? Nay, that we should love nothing but in him, and for his sake? Is it not just that we should offer up unto him our souls and bodies, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable in his sight? Rom. xii. 1; and if we have any lust that offends him, is it not just that we should cheerfully abandon it, although it should appear as profitable to us as our hands and feet, and as dear as the apple of our eye? Matt. v. Whosoever denieth not himself, is not worthy of him, Matt. x.

20. We must treat the body of sin which the Holy Scriptures call *the old man, and the first Adam*, in somewhat the same manner as Christ, *the new man, and the second Adam*, was treated in his sufferings, Rom. vi. Instead of suffering it, and endeavouring to satisfy its desires, we must deprive it of all its pleasures, give it vinegar and gall to drink, tear its head with thorns, bind and chain its affections, and nail them to the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ with all its inordinate and brutal lusts; and lastly, we must pierce it through

the heart, and destroy it: *For those that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts*, Gal. v. 24. —*Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; Fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry*, Col. iii. 5.

21. To live in sin, and delight in iniquity, is to frustrate, as much as lies in our power, the design of our Lord, and the principal end for which he left, for a season, the celestial abodes of glory and immortality; for he is come into the world to destroy the works of the devil, 1 John iii. 8. Now the chief work of this enemy of our salvation, in which he glories, and takes the most delight, is sin, with which he ensnares mankind; for by sin, death, and all kinds of calamities, entered into the world, Rom. v.

22. It is to trample upon the only Son of God, to offer violence to the Holy Spirit, and to account the blood of the covenant an unholy thing. It is to render ineffectual the death and passion of our Redeemer, and to pull down his cross: *For he himself bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness*, 1 Pet. ii. 24. He hath given himself for his church, that he might sanctify it and present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, Eph. v. 25, 26, 27. If the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, did sanctify to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered up himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? Heb. ix. 13, 14.

23. Our Lord and Saviour did not only die, but he was also buried; to teach us that we should bury with him our sins, and shut up in his tomb all our carnal affections. Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, Rom. vi. 3, 4; Col. ii. 12.

24. This glorious Saviour arose from the dead, and left in his sepulchre the linen clothes in which his body was wound, and the napkin that was about his head; to teach us to rise to a newness of life, and to leave in our grave the sin that encompasses us, and the bands of our corruption that bind us so fast. To speak with the apostle, as Jesus Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be

also in the likeness of his resurrection. And as Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more, and death hath no more dominion over him: so we ought not to yield our members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but to yield ourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, Rom. vi. 4, 5, 9, 13. He died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living, Rom. xiv. 9. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new, 2 Cor. v. 17.

25. Our blessed Saviour, after his triumphant resurrection, ascended up into heaven to engage us to raise thither our hearts and affections, and to teach us to reform our manners, and live a holy, angelical and celestial life. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth, Col. iii. 1, 2.

26. There is nothing in the world so beautiful and amiable as virtue. It is the joy and delight in heaven, the daughter of the living God, and the true and lively image of our Creator. O lovely dress of a Christian soul! O rich and precious ornament of God's children! O heavenly grace! what sweet and irresistible charms hast thou to win the hearts and affections of all such as behold thy perfect and divine beauty!

27. On the contrary, there is nothing so ugly and deformed as sin; it is a hideous monster of hell, and a frightful image of Satan. I confess it sometimes disguises itself, and assumes a beautiful appearance; but if you lift up this borrowed mask, you shall perceive the devil's terrible looks, and all the horrors of the bottomless pit.

28. Christian souls, weigh in the balance of the sanctuary, the dreadful evils that sin has brought into the world. It hath disfigured the image of God, and defaced the beauty of the creation. It hath put division between heaven and earth, and hath lighted up a war between God and man. It is a burthen beneath the weight of which the whole creation groaneth: *for because of sin, all creatures sigh, and are in travail until now*, Rom. viii.

29. It continues still its fatal effects, for it is sin that grieves the Holy Spirit, afflicts the angels, offends the weak, hardens the ignorant, and gives an occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme his holy name, and to bring up an evil report of his gospel. It is this that gratifies the devil, rejoices

hell, upholds the tottering walls of Babylon, strengthens the kingdom of the prince of darkness, and causes him to work with efficacy in the hearts of the children of disobedience, Eph. ii. 2.

30. Lift up your eyes to the cross of Jesus Christ, and you shall perceive of how execrable a nature sin is; since neither in heaven, nor on earth, could be found an offering capable to make expiation for it, and God rather chose to punish it in the person of his only Son, than to leave it unpunished. O how deep, how foul are the stains of sin, seeing that nothing but the blood of a God can wash them away.

31. When you meditate upon our Lord's death and passion, declaim not against Judas's treason, the envy of the Pharisees, nor the people's mutiny; cry not out against the impiety of Caiaphas, the injustice of Pilate, Herod's scoffs, nor the cruelty of the Roman soldiers; but be angry with your own sins, and wax warm, with a holy indignation, against your own crimes and iniquities. Say to yourselves, it is our sins alone, and the sins of those who resemble us, that have betrayed the innocent blood, have bound the Lord of glory in most ignominious bands, and delivered him into the hands of his executioners. Our sins have crowned him with thorns, nailed him to the cross, and given him gall and vinegar to drink. In short, it is our sins that have pierced his hands and feet, and opened his sacred side. You would detest the sight of the hangman, that should have fastened your father to the gallows, and would abhor to kiss his bloody hands; how much more abominable shall we appear to God and his holy angels if we caress and delight in sin? whereas we should be stirred up against it with a holy zeal, and an earnest thirst of revenge. If instead of nailing to the cross this execrable parricide, and crushing to pieces this infernal monster, we feed and cherish it in our bowels, we shall be guilty of crucifying to ourselves the Son of God afresh, and putting him to an open shame, Heb. vi. 6. It will be to tread him under our feet, and to count the blood of the covenant, wherewith we were sanctified, an unholy thing, Heb. x. 29.

32. Consider seriously the dreadful effects that sin produces in yourselves. Have you never been sensible of the cruel and horrid torments of a poor soul distressed and afflicted at the sight of his own crimes? How sharp, how piercing are the stings of a conscience awakened from a pro-

fane slumber? It is a pain and anguish that cannot be expressed; it causes our head to become water, and our eyes a fountain of tears, Jer. ix. 1. It freezes our blood, discolours our skin, and cracks and breaks all our bones. It is a common saying, that punishment follows sin close at the heels; but I will venture to maintain, that it always bears it company, and that it is a rack and torture which never leaves the guilty, *for there is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked*, Isa. xlviii. 22.

33. On the contrary, there is no satisfaction that may be compared to that of a good Christian who loves God sincerely, and worships him in spirit and in truth, John iv. 24. There is no kind of delight equal to that of a regenerate soul, that applies itself, to the utmost of its power, to the works of piety and holiness. For peace of soul, and quiet of conscience, are of more worth than treasures, crowns and sceptres. Therefore Solomon, the wisest of men, tells us, that *the good man's heart is a continual feast*, Prov. xv.; and to teach us that there is nothing like to this hidden manna, this celestial food, that the world knoweth not; and these angelical and divine pleasures, that the holy apostle informs us, that it is *a joy unspeakable and full of glory*, 1 Pet. i. 8; and *a peace of God, which passeth all understanding*, Phil. iv. 7.

34. If there is any delight or pleasure that accompanies vice, it is but superficial, and passeth away as a dream. For the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment, Job xx. 5. There is always some thorn in the flesh, some secret uneasiness: Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness, Prov. xiv. 13.

35. But the holy joy, the celestial delight of one that fears God, and worships him in integrity and purity of life, is solid and lasting. It takes root in the very bottom of our hearts, enters into our joints and marrow, and disperses itself all over the inward parts; neither gibbets, nor wheels, nor the most cruel torments that were ever invented, are able to pluck this joy from us; but it comforts the soul in the midst of its greatest agonies, and causes the broken bones to rejoice, Psal. li. 8.

36. The worldlings become weary of their fondest desires, and are afflicted at their greatest success. They grow cloyed at length of their carnal pleasures, and all their sweetness turns into bitterness; the delights of sin pall upon their taste, and they vomit them up with abhorrence. This is what Zophar would inculcate to us, when speaking of the wicked man,

he saith, *his meat in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of asps within him. He hath swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again: God shall cast them out of his belly*, Job. xx. 14, 15.

37. On the contrary, those who apply themselves with all their hearts to the fear and service of God, find that his yoke is easy, and his burthen light, Matt. xi. 30. They take a pleasure in the ways of righteousness, and run with a holy earnestness towards the goal, the prize of their spiritual calling. The more they drink of the waters of Siloah, the more they thirst. Their zeal is, as it were, a holy fire, that never saith, *It is enough*, Prov. xxx. 16. As the prophet Moses, after he had abode forty days and forty nights conversing with God in his holy mountain, came down with a shining countenance, and with the two tables of the law in his hands; so a Christian soul, that hath been lifted up to God in fervent prayer, and been conversing with him in devout meditation, cannot hide its heavenly joys, and its unspeakable delights, but burns with an earnest desire to glorify God, and to please him in every thing. When the apostle St Peter saw the transfiguration of our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ upon Mount Tabor, he was ravished and transported in such a manner, that he cried out, *Lord it is good for us to be here; if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles.* Thus the good Christian, who is enlightened with the light from above, is never weary in the company of his God; if he should live whole ages, he would not believe that he had too much time to serve his Creator, to adore his divine Majesty, and to feast himself with the unspeakable pleasures of his presence. As all the years of Jacob's service seemed to him but a few days, because of the love that he bore to Rachel, Gen. xxix; the days that we spend in the service of God, will seem to be but a few hours, or a few minutes, provided our love for God be ardent and sincere.

38. Represent to yourselves the fearful curse that attends the wicked and profane. They carry about them every where the marks of God's anger and just revenge. They are the objects of public hatred, and are looked upon as execrable by all. Those who flatter and fawn upon them for some present advantage, abominate and curse them in their hearts; and they, who out of a servile fear seem to honour, or rather to adore them in the face of the sun, would be exceeding joyful to dance upon their graves, and would gladly erect a gallows to hang them thereon.

39. It is otherwise with good men, they are honoured both

by God and man; and even those who are their greatest enemies admire their virtues. Let us be never so poor, and contemptible in the world, we are rich and noble enough if we fear God as we ought, and obey his holy will; for the fear of the Lord is our most precious treasure, it is our crown, our diadem, and our wreath of triumph.

40. The wicked man is a constant terror to himself. He trembles in the midst of his guards, and flieth when no man pursueth, Prov. xxviii. 1. Every thing alarms and gives him jealousy; he distrusts his best friends, his children are suspected by him, and even in the arms of his dearest wife he slumbers with an unquiet spirit.

41. It is not so with a good man: he walks every where with an upright countenance, and his heart rejoiceth in an unfeigned tranquillity. For there is no bulwark like that of a good conscience; it is like a wall of brass, that mocks the batteries of the times and seasons. He that feareth God shall come out of them all, Eccles. vii. 18. The finger of God, which hath planted in his soul the fear of his holy name, shall banish thence all other apprehensions. He is like Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, Psal. cxxv. 1. He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord, Psal. cxii. 7. In the midst of the greatest dangers, and the most violent tempests, he saith with David, The Lord is my light, and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? Psal. xxvii. 1. Thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head. I laid me down and slept; I awaked, for the Lord sustained me. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about, Psal. iii. 3, 5, 6. Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear, Psal. xxvii. 3.

42. Let the wicked be ever so great and honourable, and advanced to ever so high a pitch of glory, their name shall rot for ever, Prov. x. 7. It is to no purpose that they erect magnificent trophies, fill whole volumes with the story of their lives, and teach even the marble to publish their praise. For whatever method they may take to immortalize their glory, their name will be always abominable to God and his holy angels; and mankind shall never remember it but with curses and detestation. These infamous persons are like a lamp that gives light for a time, but when it goes out, yields a most ungrateful smell; or they may be compared to certain demons, that never go out of any place without leaving an intolerable stench behind them.

43. On the contrary, the renown of the good shall flourish for ever. Like the palm tree, the more men endeavour to abase it, the more it shall rise up. Their names are engraven in heaven itself, in the glorious temple of eternity. It shall be blessed for ever by God and his holy angels, and the example of their Christian virtues shall serve as a pattern and model for posterity. A faithful Christian, whose soul is sanctified by the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, is like the alabaster box of ointment, which, when it was broken over our Saviour's head, shed forth a precious liquid that perfumed all the room, Mark xiv. For such a one lives after his death; and when his body is broken and reduced to ashes, his good name spreads abroad to the glory of God, and the edification of his church. Mary Magdalen's perfume scented only one chamber, and soon passed away: but the sweet perfume of a holy and innocent life, fills both heaven and earth with a grateful odour, and continues for ever and ever.

44. I am of opinion, that another powerful motive to withdraw us from vice, and induce us to virtue, is to represent to ourselves, at every moment, the excellence and dignity of our calling; and to take a delight in beholding, with the eyes of our soul, the white stone, whereon the new name is written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it, Rev. ii. 17; that is, the noble and precious quality of being a child of God and a believer, which he bestoweth upon none but those whom he hath chosen from all eternity to partake of salvation, and the glory of his kingdom. It is reported of a certain young prince, that when he was upon the point of abandoning himself to all manner of debauchery, by giving loose to his inclinations, a wise philosopher reclaimed him, by only saying to him, *Remember, that thou art son to a king.* Thus, you, O Christian souls, when Satan, the flesh, and the world, shall tempt you to impure and unjust actions, or to any other sin, call to mind that you are the children of the King of Kings, and soil not the lustre of so rich a crown. And as our blessed Saviour said unto him, who, instead of following him immediately, was desirous to go first and bury his father, *Let the dead bury their dead,* Matt. viii. 22; so we likewise say unto you, O devout souls, who have freely consecrated yourselves unto God and his service, leave these vain and base employments, and all these dead works: leave them to such as are dead in their trespasses and sins. But for you, behave yourselves agreeable to your heavenly calling, apply yourselves to right-

cousness and holiness, and to the practice of all other virtues, as those that are alive from the dead, Rom. vi. 13.

45. We must also continually meditate upon the holiness and purity of the place to which we are going, and the expectation that we have there. For as Jesus Christ has gone to prepare a place for us in the palace of his heavenly Father, John xiv. 2; it is but just and reasonable that we should prepare our souls for such holy and glorious mansions. There is no going to heaven through the paths of hell; and any thing impure, any thing that defileth, shall in no wise enter into the holy city, the New Jerusalem, Rev. xxi. 27. As in the temple of Solomon, there was no way to the Holy of Holies but through the sanctuary; so if we would enter into the heavenly sanctuary, where Christ Jesus sits enthroned, who is the true ark of the covenant, and the true mercy seat, it is absolutely necessary that we should tread in the path of good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them, Eph. ii. 10. It is upon this expectation that we have in heaven, that St Paul grounds his exhortation to piety and the Christian virtues, *The grace of God*, saith he, *that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*, Tit. ii. 11, 12, 13, 14. *Having therefore these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God*, 2 Cor. vii. 1. St John employs the same argument to persuade us to holiness of life, *Beloved now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure*, 1 John iii. 2, 3. The apostle St Peter makes use of the same consideration to kindle in our hearts this pure and celestial fire: We, saith he, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless, 2 Pet. iii. 13, 14.

46. You know, Christians, that God created our first

parents in his image, after his likeness, before he brought them into the terrestrial paradise, Gen. i. 26; therefore, there is the strongest reason why this divine image should be re-engraved in our souls, before we enter into the celestial paradise: and without doubt, the apostle hath a regard to this, when he saith to the Ephesians, Be ye renewed in the spirit of your mind: and put ye on that new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, chap. iv. 23, 24.

47. If the place where we are going obliges us to holiness of life, the quality of the persons with whom we hope to make our eternal abode requires it from us no less: for they shall be angels of light, and those blessed saints who have whitened their garments in the blood of the Lamb, Rev. vii. It is a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, Eph. v. 27. It is the spouse of the son of God, arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints, Rev. xix. 8. The apostle St Paul had the same consideration in his thoughts, when he saith, That we are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, Eph. ii. 19. And that our conversation is in heaven, Phil. iii. 20. To wean us from the impure deeds of the flesh, and from the profane disposition of Esau, he makes use of the same motive in Heb. xii. Ye are come, saith he, unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven; and to the spirits of just men made perfect.

48. As a child in the womb of its mother begins to live the same life (that is, to discharge the same animal functions), as it does after it is come into the world; so likewise a Christian ought to live here upon earth in the same manner as he hopes to live for ever in heaven. If we would live and reign with Christ above in his kingdom, he must first live and reign in our hearts here below.

49. The chief happiness of man consists not only in knowing the true God and Jesus christ whom he hath sent, John xvii. 3; nor in that spiritual peace, and heavenly joy, which the Holy Ghost sheds abroad in our hearts, Rom. v. 5; but it likewise consists in holiness of life, without which no man shall see the Lord, Heb. xii. 14. Therefore the apostle speaks thus to the Romans of his time, What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? But now being made free from sin, and become servants to

God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life, Rom. vi. 21, 22.

50. I am also of opinion, that it is a very good remedy against the debaucheries and corruptions of the age, to abstain from the company and acquaintance of vicious persons. For as he who touched any unclean thing, became thereby unclean, Lev. xi.; and as those who converse with persons infected with the plague, easily catch the infection; so evil communications corrupt good manners, 1 Cor. xv. 33.

51. On the contrary, we should earnestly covet the acquaintance of good men, and delight in the society of those who, like the seraphims, excite and inflame one another to glorify God, and to sing forth his praise, Isa. vi. 3. We must frequent the company of such as we wish to resemble: for as Jacob's sheep brought forth lambs speckled and spotted, like the rods upon which they cast their eyes, Gen. xxx.; so if we keep our eyes fixed upon the bright examples of piety and virtue, we shall find ourselves insensibly transformed into their image and resemblance. We ought to delight here below in their company with whom we hope to live for ever in the highest heaven.

52. The most powerful and most effectual motive to induce us to the practice of piety and holiness, is to look with the eyes of our faith upon him who is invisible, Heb. xi., and to represent to ourselves the whole world as a temple which he inhabits. Let the voice that Moses heard out of the midst of the burning bush, sound continually in our mental ears, *Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground*, Exod. iii. 5. Put off here thy base and earthly affections, and renounce thy infamous and filthy lusts; for thou art always in my sight, who am of purer eyes than to behold evil, Hab. i. 13; and the place where thou standest is sanctified by my presence. Remember that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts, Rev. ii. 23; and that I know thy most secret thoughts. Christian soul, imagine to thyself every moment, that God calls unto thee from his sanctuary, as he did heretofore unto Abraham, Walk before me, and be thou perfect, Gen. xvii. 1. Let, therefore, the dread of this divine majesty seize thee, and be always upon thee. When Potiphar's wife tempted the chastity of Joseph, and urged him to defile himself with adultery, she saw nothing in the room but this object of her lust; but this holy man beheld, between him and this immodest woman, a glorious godhead, and an eye that penetrates into the profoundest abyss, which caused him to

cry out, *How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?* Gen. xxxix. 9. Thus, if our flesh tempts us, and the wicked and profane endeavour to entice us into their secret and shameful retreats, to partake of their crimes, let us remember God is every where; and that in whatsoever place we hide ourselves, God hath an ear that hears us, an eye that sees us, and a hand that writes down all our deeds, words and thoughts. God is all eye, all ear, and all hand. He sees us as plainly under the dark covering of the night, as at sun-rising. He discovers us through our fig-leaves, and beholds us under all our most subtle disguises. He reads our most inward thoughts, and hears the silent language of our hearts. He searcheth into the closets of our souls, and pursues us through all the winding labyrinths of our conscience. In a word, *all things are naked, and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do*, Heb. iv. 13. An ancient philosopher advised those who were lovers of virtue, to choose to themselves some grave and virtuous person, for their pattern and example, to have him always in their thoughts, and to live as if they were always in his presence. But we have no occasion to represent to ourselves any such imaginary person; for in whatsoever place we are, whatever we do or think, we are always in the presence of the Holy of Holies, who is both our witness and our judge. This was David's meditation when he cried out, "O Lord! whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee," Psal. cxxxix. 7, &c.

53. If Satan and the world have ensnared us in their nets, and if we have been unfortunately lulled asleep in the bosom of some deceitful pleasure; this consideration alone, that God sees and hears us, is sufficient to awake us with a holy dread. Therefore let this alarm of St Paul's sound continually in our ears, *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give the light*, Eph. v. 14; and this other, *Awake to righteousness, and sin not*, 1 Cor. xv. 34. Certainly, if we are not more foolish than folly itself, this voice which thunders from heaven, is able, not only to

awake us from the slumber of our sins, but also to cause us to cry out with the patriarch Jacob, *Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven*, Gen. xxviii. 16, 17. The apostle St Peter, as soon as our Saviour turned and looked upon him, went out of the high priest's hall, and wept bitterly for his apostacy, Luke xxii. Thus, if we could always but remember that God casts his eyes continually upon us, we should immediately abandon our vicious practices, and our hearts would melt in tears of contrition.

54. They who have a powerful and malicious enemy, that is continually upon the watch, to spy out something or other whereof to accuse them before the judge, that they may be condemned to lose their lives, are always upon their guard, nor would they for the whole world let drop in their presence the least word, or commit the least action that might give them an advantage. Now, there is no enemy more powerful and malicious than Satan, who watches us day and night, that he may have wherewith to accuse us before God, and drag us into hell. For which reason he is called, Rev. xii., *The accuser of the brethren, which accuseth them before God both day and night.* He likewise keeps an exact register of all our idle words and wicked deeds, to produce before the throne of God, when the book shall be opened, and God shall render unto every one according to his works. Take good heed, therefore, Christians, of this dreadful accuser, of this irreconcileable enemy to your salvation. Give him not cause to rejoice at your ruin, or to triumph at the loss of your precious souls. To this the apostle exhorts us, in the 4th chapter of the Ephesians, when he saith, *Neither give place to the devil*, ver. 27.

55. And because it is sometimes necessary to restrain ourselves with a holy fear, pulling ourselves out of the fire, Jude 23; keep always in your minds, O religious souls, a short catalogue of the judgments which God hath inflicted from time to time upon sinners. Reflect upon what hath befallen the heavenly spirits which kept not their first estate, and which are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day, Jude 6; and say unto yourself, if God hath not spared the apostate angels, will he spare man, that rebels against him, and takes a pleasure in offending him? Think on the dreadful fall of our first parents, who, although they were fashioned by God's own hand, and instructed immediately by him, lost both themselves and

their posterity, by listening to the deceitful suggestions of the old serpent, Gen. iii. Cast your eyes upon the world of the ungodly which was destroyed by the waters of the deluge, Gen. vii.; and upon the cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, upon whom the Lord rained from heaven, the fire and brimstone of his hot displeasure, Gen. xix. Look upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians, overthrown with all their pride, in the waves of the Red Sea, Exod. xiv. Remember the three thousand men that were slain by the swords of the Levites, because of the idolatry of the golden calf, Exod. xxxii.; and the four and twenty thousand swept away by the pestilence, because they went a whoring after Baalpeor, Numb. xxv. Look with fear upon the fiery serpents in the wilderness, that cast their poison upon the murmurers against God and his servants, Numb. xxi.; upon the earth that opened its mouth to swallow Korah, Dathan and Abiram, Numb. xvi.; upon the fire that came out from the Lord, and devoured Nadab and Abihu, who offered strange fire before him, Lev. x.; upon the beasts that came out of the wood and tore forty and two children which mocked Elisha, 2 Kings ii.; upon the lion that slew the prophet who disobeyed God's command, and hearkened to a lying brother, 1 Kings xiii. In short, cast your eyes with astonishment upon Nebuchadnezzar, who did eat grass as oxen, Dan. iv.; upon Jezebel, eaten by dogs, 2 Kings ix.; Herod devoured by worms, Acts xii.; and the rich glutton burning in the flames of hell, Luke xvi.

56. Above all things, meditate upon the last judgment, and represent to yourselves this great day, in which we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad, 2 Cor. v. 10. Remember, that in this terrible day, God will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, the closest contrivances, and the most secret thoughts of the heart. Before his throne of fire, the books shall be opened; not only God's books, wherein all our sins and iniquities are written, but also the books of our consciences, where we shall behold the horrid image of all our crimes and abominations. In the day of this glorious appearance, in which the heavens shall melt away, the elements be dissolved, and the earth and all its works be consumed with fire, every man shall give an account of every idle word, Matt. xii. 36; how much more then of every sinful action, and profane discourse?

57. That we may not be confounded nor ashamed in this

dreadful day, in which God will judge the world by that man whom he hath ordained, Acts xvii. 31; let us be thoroughly persuaded, that it is not enough to abstain outwardly from sin, but we must also hate, and inwardly detest and abhor it. For as the leopard changes not his skin, nor his spots, though confined in chains, much less his cruel and rapacious nature, but still continues a leopard; and as a thief, although in fetters, and shut up in a dungeon, remains still a thief in his heart; so such as abstain from the outward acts of sin, only for fear of men, and the punishment of the laws, are nevertheless vicious and abominable in the sight of God and his holy angels, if, every time they think upon their crimes, they are not moved with a true contrition, and abhor them not with all their hearts. The best way to make our conscience whole is to tear it in pieces with the piercing sorrows of a true repentance.

58. It is not enough that we abstain from such thoughts, words and actions, as God forbids, but we must also apply ourselves to the practice of piety and virtue, and in general, of all the good works that God requires. For as the praise and honour of a good bowman is never bestowed upon one who hath no other merit than that of not breaking his bow, his arrows and his quiver, but upon him who aims aright and hits the mark; and as he is not commended for a good artist, who works not amiss, because he does nothing at all, but he who works well, and produces excellent pieces of workmanship; so he is not to be accounted a good and pious Christian, who only abstains from evil, and commits no wilful sin, but he that doth good, and applies himself to the practice of virtue. Every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit, although it bringeth forth no evil fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire, Matt. iii. 10. Our Saviour cursed the fig-tree, not because it brought forth bad figs, but because it brought forth no figs at all, but was altogether barren, Matt. xxi. The wicked servant was cast into utter darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth; not because he had lost or embezzled his talent, but because he had not employed it well, and turned it to his Lord's advantage, Matt. xxv. Not only such shall be condemned to the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, who persecute God's children here upon earth, snatch the bread out of their mouths, and spill the blood of his martyrs, but also such as have not clothed his members, visited and comforted them, and given them wherewith to eat and drink, Matt. xxv. In short, inquire of the rich glutton, how he comes to be condemned to

hell, and why he is tortured in the flames? He will not tell you, it is because he dispossessed another of his right, or because he committed murders, rapes and other such horrid deeds, but because he lived without charity, and had no compassion on the poor, Luke xvi.

59. And because God requires that we should always go forwards, and grow in goodness, until we come into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, Eph. iv. 13. We must frequently take a view of our past lives, and feel the pulse of our vices, to see whether they beat less fervent and violent than before, whether the old man is upon the decline, and how much we have gained upon our wicked and depraved inclinations. For as those that swim against the stream, if they slack their endeavours but ever so little, are carried insensibly downwards by the violence of the current; so if we employ not all our strength to swim up to our heavenly source, the torrent of our vices and evil customs will force us down into the deep abyss of death and eternal destruction. We must, therefore, examine every day, what progress we have made in piety and holiness, and whether since the many years that God hath spoken unto us, and vouchsafed us the knowledge of what is pleasing in his sight, we have more piety, zeal, charity and holiness than we had before. We must imitate the care of those who having transplanted some rare eastern plant into this northern climate, have always their eye upon it, and curiously observe every accident that happens to it. We must propose to ourselves the example of a faithful steward, who having a great account to make up, often looks upon his memorandums and registers. A heathen philosopher was thought worthy of the highest commendation, because he never laid himself down to sleep, till he had examined what progress he had made in philosophy and moral virtue; and shall a Christian dare to go to his repose at night, till he hath seriously inquired what improvements he hath made in piety and the love of God? In short, by this means, a true Christian will never be less alone than when he is alone: for he will then entertain himself with his God, unbosom his heart unto him, and his most secret thoughts. He will enter into conversation with his soul, and examine his conscience with severity and rigour. He will then look back upon his wicked deeds, to lament them with the tears of a sincere repentance; upon the mercy of God, to embrace it with a lively faith, and upon God's commands, to walk in them with a holy earnestness all the days of his life.

60. Among the directions that I am about to give to him that desires to abandon vice, and to apply himself to the practice of virtue; I must not forget that he should take an especial care never to indulge his carnal inclinations and sinful lusts, but rather to bridle and restrain them. For when we grant them what they desire, we are so far from extinguishing their feverish flames, and infernal thirst, that we do but encourage and increase them the more. As he that loves money is never satisfied with money, and as the highest honours are not sufficient to content the ambitious; so the voluptuous worldling is never satisfied with the enjoyment of carnal pleasures. It is a flame that immediately kindles another, and a fire that never saith, *It is enough*, Prov. xxx. 16. These inordinate appetites are like the serpent, that stings the bosom in which it is warmed; or like the fiery furnace of Babylon, that burned up those who first heated it, Dan. iii. 22; for such as encourage and feed the flames of their impure pleasures, kindle in their breasts a fire that will at last devour and totally consume them.

61. We must resist the first motions of the flesh, and with the shield of faith, quench the first fiery darts of the devil, Eph. vi. 16. For as it is very easy to put out the first sparks of an increasing fire, which, if neglected, might occasion a terrible conflagration; and as we can easily pluck up with one hand a young tree that has been planted but a few days; but if we suffer it to take root, and to gather strength, we shall not be able to pluck it up with both hands, but must be forced to have recourse to the axe; thus, if we resist sin in the beginning, we shall easily overcome and subdue it; we shall extinguish, without difficulty, the first sparks of this strange fire, and shall pluck up with ease this dreadful plant that blossoms bitterness. But if we suffer this infernal fire to increase, all the waters of the sea will not be able to extinguish it; and if we give leave to this cursed plant to grow, it will never be plucked up without much labour and sorrow. Sin never begins as it ends, and discovers not all its venom at once. As the child in its mother's womb is not made in a moment; so the monster of hell is formed by degrees, one link of the devil's chain drawing on another. *When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin*, James i. 15. From the thought, proceeds the temptation; from the temptation, pleasure and delight; from delight, consent; and after consent, follows the deed, which begets the habit; whence the sinner becomes hardened in sin. Thus the devil aggravates

the weight of his tyrannical yoke, and strengthens the chains by which he drags us into eternal damnation.

62. As among the planets there is always one that ruleth and causeth his influences to be felt upon earth, more than the others; so among our vices and daring sins there is always some one that predominates, to which we are by nature more inclined than to the rest. Of this, therefore, we ought to take heed in an especial manner. Here we ought to employ all our strength and industry, for fear the devil should make use of it, as a means to enter into our souls, and establish there his tyranny. We must imitate, in this respect, the conduct of a wise and brave captain, who having a place to defend against a vigilant and active enemy, fortifies those posts that are naturally the weakest, furnishes them with the best soldiers, and keeps there a strict and continual watch. *Wherefore take unto you,* O Christian souls, *the armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand,* Eph. vi. 13.

63. We must not neglect any sin, nor imagine there are not any so small and inconsiderable that God regards them not. For *a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,* 1 Cor. v. 6; and even a dead fly causeth the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour, Eccl. x. 1. The least scratch may cause a violent inflammation, and a little poison is sufficient to lay us in our graves. The devil cares not by what door he enters into our souls, nor by what tie he takes hold of our hearts. This cursed serpent slides through the least cranny into our house, as well as through the widest gate. Christian souls, *Give not place to the devil,* Eph. iv. 27; but stop your ears to the voice of his charming, Psal. lviii.

64. We must not only avoid all manner of sin, and abstain from all appearance of evil, 1 Thess. v. 22; but for our better security in a matter of this great importance, and that we may not endanger our salvation, we must take heed of all those things whereof our souls are doubtful, and about which our consciences are not yet satisfied. We must never do any thing but what we are fully persuaded is agreeable to God, and pleasing in his sight: *For whatsoever is not of faith is sin,* Rom. xiv. 23.

65. As they who desire to stop the current of a running water, are wont to cut for it a new channel: so if your vicious passions are too violent, you must divert them, by

employing them upon new objects. Are you choleric? *be angry and sin not*, Eph. iv. 26. Burn with a holy indignation against your sins, and carnal appetites, and dash in pieces those children of Babel. Are you oppressed with melancholy or grief? let the causes of your sadness be your offences against God, and the scandal you have given to his church. Are you of a violent and impatient temper? remember to be of the number of those who take the kingdom of heaven by force, Matt. xi. 12. Are you inclined to covetousness? lay up for yourself the riches and treasures of heaven. Are you lifted up with ambitious thoughts? let your ambition aim at an immortal throne, and an incorruptible crown of glory. Are you voluptuous, and given to your pleasures? endeavour to enjoy the chaste and ravishing delights of the Holy Spirit, and meditate continually upon the everlasting joys that are reserved for you in heaven.

66. Devout souls, who sigh and groan for your infirmities, and labour after perfection, apply yourselves to read and meditate upon God's holy word with a religious attention, and before you enter upon this divine lecture, say with the royal prophet, *Lord, open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law*, Psal. cxix. 18. Entreat him that he will please to open your hearts, as he did Lydia's, Acts xvi. 14; to receive this incorruptible seed of your regeneration, 1 Pet. i. 23; that ye may become the children of obedience: for in proportion as you hear the Lord's voice, you will find your souls inflamed with his holy love. When we behold a beautiful countenance, we become not thereby more beautiful, nor do we take from it any of its excellent features: But we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

67. Take a pleasure to meditate often upon God's wonderful works, and to sing forth his praise. The spiritual songs inspired by the Holy Ghost, commonly appease all the tumults of our mind, and beget in us a holy and celestial peace. As when Saul was troubled with an evil spirit, David played with his harp before him, and by that means quieted his disturbed mind; so when hatred, anger, revenge, covetousness, ambition, lust, or any other of our unruly passions, which are as so many evil spirits, trouble and disturb our souls, we must seek a remedy from David's harp, and sing unto the Lord psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, with grace in our hearts, Col. iii. 16.

68. We must carefully attend all the public exercises of devotion, and *not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is*, Heb. x. 25. *For where two or three are gathered together in my name*, saith the Lord, *there I AM in the midst of them*, Matt. xviii. 20. St Thomas, who was not with the apostles when Christ first appeared amongst them, lost the comfort which they received of seeing him risen from the dead; and if this merciful Redeemer had not had compassion on him, he had perished for ever in his unbelief, John xx. If, upon the day of Pentecost, any of the followers of Christ had been absent from the holy assembly of the faithful in Jerusalem, they had not seen the glorious appearance of the Holy Ghost, Acts ii. Who knows, but by neglecting a sermon, we may have lost some happy exhortation, seasoned with the salt of piety, by which God might have brought our hearts to repentance? Instead of the fire that devours us, perhaps we might have felt a soft and lambent flame kindled in our souls, like that of the bush in Horeb, which burned without being consumed, Exod. iii.; and at the breaking up of the assembly, might have said, as the two disciples of Christ going to Emmaus, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures," Luke xxiv. 32.

69. We must be zealous and constant in prayer, and embracing our Lord and Saviour with the arms of faith and repentance, must say unto him with Jacob, *I will not let thee go, except thou bless me*, Gen. xxxii. 26. Chiefly we ought to apply ourselves, with a holy fervour, to this divine exercise, when we feel the inward and painful struggling of the flesh against the spirit, Gal. v. We should imitate that pious and virtuous woman, who feeling two children struggling in her womb, fell to her prayers, and unburthened her sorrows in the bosom of her heavenly father, Gen. xxv. And as the apostle St Peter, when he began to sink in walking upon the sea, cried, saying, *Lord, save me!* Matt. xiv. 30; so we, who walk upon the dangerous sea of this world, as soon as we find ourselves sinking into the vices of the age, or as soon as the waves of bad examples, evil customs, overwhelm us, let us cry out from the bottom of our hearts, *O Lord, send thine hand from above, and deliver me from these waters of hell that carry me away*, Psal. cxliv. 7. Let thy strength be made perfect in my weakness, 2 Cor. xii. 9; let thy Holy Spirit subdue mine; let heaven overcome earth, and let Paradise lead hell in triumph. If we

make this prayer with a sincere heart, God will hear us in his holy sanctuary. He will quench the fire that burns us, stop the lion's mouth that is ready to devour us, rebuke the winds and storms that the devils have raised in our souls, and at his first entrance into our ship, tossed up and down with fears and apprehensions, will restore peace and a blessed tranquillity, and will carry us safe into the haven of eternal salvation. As Moses, when he had been conversing with God, came down from the mountain with a shining countenance, Exod. xxxiv.; and as our Saviour, when he was in prayer upon Mount Tabor, was transfigured, his raiment becoming as white as the light, and his face shining as the sun, Matt. xvii.; so if we lift up our hearts above all earthly and corruptible things, and seek God by prayer, with a holy earnestness and zeal, we shall see our souls clothed with holiness, and full of shining light. They will be transformed into the glorious image of the great God whom we adore: for *they looked unto him and were lightened*, Psal. xxxiv. 5.

70. To the end that we may keep under this body, and bring it into subjection, 1 Cor. ix.; and that we may be able to subdue all our sinful and dangerous inclinations, it is necessary that we should sometimes add fasting to our prayers. We must not always expect the times appointed by the church upon solemn occasions, but we must prescribe to ourselves a fast, according as we see it is useful and expedient. For if this flesh kicks against the pricks, and proves rebellious against God and his holy laws, if ease and plenty encourage its impurities and insolence, let us deprive it of its food and delicacies, and labour to mortify it by fastings and abstinence, remembering what our Saviour Jesus Christ saith in the gospel, that there are some evil spirits that are not *to be cast out, but by prayer and fasting*, Matt. xvii. 21.

71. If at length, by the fervour and earnestness of our prayer, by austere fasting, by the bitter tears of repentance, and by the assistance and blessing of the Holy Spirit upon our devotions, we obtain of Almighty God grace to subdue our sins, and mortify our lusts, we must take heed that we fall not into a carnal security, and become negligent of good works. Deceive not yourselves, religious souls, and suffer not yourselves to be surprised; for many times the old man makes as if he were dead, that we may not offer to strike him the last blow, and that he may have an opportunity to recover

himself, and to acquire new strength. There are always under the ashes some sparks of an infernal fire, that are capable of lighting up new mischiefs. Vice is never so entirely rooted out, but there remains some string or other in the heart that may sprout out again. This source of iniquity is never so dry, but it may run afresh. As in time of peace, men prepare new armour, and exercise themselves at tilts and tournaments; so during the calm and rest of our souls, we must prepare armour for our spiritual warfare; and as it is not sufficient to make ourselves masters of a fortress, and to drive out the enemy's forces, but we must also watch night and day, and keep a strong and constant guard, that we may not suffer a fatal and shameful surprise; so when we have overcome the devil, and driven him out of our hearts, we must be always upon the guard, and stop every avenue, for fear this unclean spirit should return, *with seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and our last state be worse than the first*, Matt. xii. 45.

72. To these works of piety and devotion, in which our minds cannot always be employed, we must remember to add a lawful calling; for idleness is the mother of all vices; and when we are doing nothing, the devil is sure to tempt us to do evil. This is what befell David, the man after God's own heart, when he gave way, contrary to his usual custom, to an unworthy indolence; whilst he was gazing into his neighbour's house, Satan seized the opportunity to enter into his heart, and, by the assistance of an immodest object, inflamed his soul with lust. As the iron that is not used becomes rusty, as the standing water putrifies, and as the earth that is not cultivated engenders insects and venomous serpents; so a soul that is not employed is soon covered over with the rust of vice. It is easily carried away by the corruptions of age, and is apt to beget and bring forth monsters. Therefore the prophet Ezekiel, examining the beginning and first source of Sodom's sin, tells us, *That it was pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness*, Ezek. xvi. 49. Christians, if you desire to keep your souls pure and undefiled, that the Holy Spirit may reign in them, give no place to the devil, Eph. iv. 27. Let him always find you busied in some lawful employment, and let him never see you at leisure, to assault you with his hellish temptations.

73. In the last place, we must seriously think upon death, and represent it always before our eyes. For as a pilot, to

direct and steer a ship aright, ought to be in the stern, to sit there at the helm; so, to govern the course of this life as we ought, we must have regard to our latter end, and must always live as if we were about to die, and to breathe forth our last gasp. Therefore this sentence is worthy to be engraven upon cedar, in letters of gold, *Whatsoever thou takest in hand, remember the end, and thou shalt never do amiss*, Eccl. vii. 36.

Wonder not Christian souls, if in this treatise, wherein I recommend to you remedies against the fears of death, I would have death itself be a remedy against sin, to which it owes all its terrors; for these things are united and linked together, or rather, they hold one another by the hand: for as a good and holy life is the best preparation for a happy death, so death is a powerful motive to oblige us to live well. And indeed there is no one, unless he is become brutish and desperate, but at the hour of death laments at the remembrance of his former sinful life, and grieves that he hath not applied himself to the fear of God, and to the practice of Christian virtues. If a malefactor, after he is condemned to die, and has heard the sentence pronounced against him, instead of prayer and repentance, by which such a one is to dispose himself to go to God, should mind nothing but drinking and gaming, every one would wonder at him, as at a monster and a madman: so, if we reflect as we ought, that death is certain and unavoidable, that God has pronounced the sentence in his just anger, and that none shall be excepted, this will be sufficient to recall us from vice, and to persuade us to holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord, Heb. xii. 14. Therefore, whenever Satan, the world, or our own flesh, entice us to any evil action, let us think within ourselves, would I have death overtake me while I am thus employed? Am I in a fit disposition to go unto God, and to appear before his tribunal? This is what Jesus the son of Syrach had well considered, when he pronounced this excellent sentence, which I have already taken notice of, and which I could wish was engraven in the heart of every Christian, *Remember the end, and thou shalt never do amiss*, Eccl. vii. 36.

We must therefore labour to live in the world without partaking of its corruptions, or defiling ourselves with its abominations. As fish preserves its sweetness in the midst of the salt waves of the sea, and as sheep never learn to bark, or to rend each other, though dogs are always with them; in the same manner, though our conversation is in the world,

among the profane children of this age, we must not imitate their lewd discourse, their oaths and blasphemies; much less their wicked and abominable deeds. We must live in the midst of them, as Lot in the city of Sodom, Joseph in Egypt, or Daniel in Babylon, *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power,* Rev. xx. 6.

When the patriarch Jacob, by God's command, went to Bethel, he charged his wives, his children, and all that were with him, saying, "Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments; and let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and he hid them under an oak which was by Shechem," Gen. xxxv. 2, 3, 4. Thus, before you go to the true Bethel, to the dwelling where you shall eat of the bread of the kingdom of heaven, before you offer unto God the sacrifice of your souls, you must, if you are true Christians, renounce sin, and all those wicked lusts, whereof ye have made idols unto yourselves. I would willingly advise you to do as Jacob did, to bury them deep in the earth. But you had better represent to yourselves, that Almighty God calls upon you from heaven, saying, "Trample under foot all those abominable vices, and all these carnal lusts, that are to you as so many false gods which you worship." "Put away from before me these images of jealousy, which provoke me to jealousy," Ezek. viii. 3; and sanctify the temple of my holiness. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double minded, James iv. 8. "Put off the old man with his deeds; and put ye on that new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," Eph. iv. 22, 24. And then ye shall be admitted into the holy temple of my glory, to offer unto me, amongst the innumerable company of saints, the acceptable incense of praise and thanksgiving.

This is a duty so just and necessary, that reason, enlightened by grace, sees at first sight the justice and necessity of it; nay, even the most wicked wretches are constrained to give glory to God, and to pass upon themselves the sentence of condemnation; they confess that they owe this debt to the divine Majesty, but then they put off the payment of it from day to day; and whenever you call upon them, they are ready to request a delay. They acknowledge their faults,

the heinousness of their crimes, and the necessity of repentance; but they are always for deferring this repentance and reformation of life. As when a sluggard is awakened out of his sleep, instead of leaving his bed, he requires, *yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep*, Prov. xxiv. 33; so whenever death appears, the voluptuous are for desiring to enjoy their carnal delights a little longer. When the Lord's messengers are calling upon us to repair the breaches which the devil hath made in our souls, we are inclined to answer them, as the Jews did the prophet Haggai, *The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house shall be built*, chap. i. 2. The young man cries that it is not yet time to busy himself about wisdom and reformation, and that when he comes to be old, he will repent of the sins of his youth; and the old man puts off his repentance till the hour of his departure. He designs then to make a general confession of all his crimes, to satisfy all his neighbours, and to restore what he possesseth unjustly. In short, the greatest part of mankind flatter themselves miserably in this important point, and are so extravagantly foolish as to imagine that when they have lived in sin and iniquity all their lives, mispent God's blessings, and abused his grace, a tear, or a groan, in the article of death, will make sufficient amends; and that God will be fully satisfied, if we cry then with the prodigal son, *Father I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight*, Luke xv. 21; or with the good thief, *Lord remember me*, Luke xxiii. 42.

I have many things to urge against this monstrous blindness, this horrid and fatal impiety. In the first place, what reason have we to believe that God will wait for our repentance, when we cannot endure that he should make us wait for the blessings of his providence; that he will hear our groans, and grant our prayers, when we will by no means give ear to his voice, nor obey his repeated commands to turn unto him?

Wretched man! wilt thou defer to glorify God till the moment that thy breath fails thee? Is it just and reasonable that thou shouldst then begin to serve him, when thou art no longer able to serve the flesh, and to satisfy thy foolish lusts?

This great God, who commanded, during the shadows and types of the Mosaical law, that the children of Israel should offer unto him their first-born, and the first fruits of their heritages, will be pleased now, in this bright sunshine of the gospel, that thou shouldst offer to the

devil, and the world, the first fruits of thy youth, the strength and vigour of thy years, and that thou shouldst reserve for him nothing but the dregs and rottenness of a feeble old age?

It is to mock both God and man, to think of living well when our life is just departing from us; to lift up our eyes to heaven, when the earth sinks under our feet; to restore other men's goods, when we can detain them no longer; to renounce all thirst of revenge, when we have no power of vengeance; to abstain from the filthy lusts of the flesh, when we are able to continue in them no longer; to abhor theft, usury, rapine and extortion, when our shroud is preparing, and death hath fast hold on us. Such persons cannot be said to leave sin, but rather sin to abandon them, as the ravens leave the tree that falls down with age, or that is struck with thunder.

By our unreasonable delays the malady grows habitual, and the cure becomes every day more difficult. For the more thou shalt be hardened in thy sins, and confirmed in thy iniquities, the harder it will be for thee to break and melt down thy obdurate heart. The deeper vice shall have taken root in thy soul, the more trouble thou shalt find in plucking it up. In short, he that gives the reins too much to his unlawful affections, engrafts his vices into his nature, and cannot be converted without a kind of miracle.

Man's most difficult and most important work in this world, is his conversion to God. Therefore, it is to offend against common sense, to put it off to such a time as we shall be in the feeblest and weakest condition; to a time when we shall have the most business upon our hands, and be the least able to despatch it. Doubtless he takes his measures entirely wrong, who puts off his praying to God, and his thoughts to heaven, till he comes to lie upon his deathbed; for then we know not whom to answer first. An account of worldly affairs is required of us; we are then to make our last will and testament; we call for a scrivener, and are grieved to behold him: the visit of friends importune us, and their absence gives no less uneasiness: pain seizes upon us: defluctions are ready to strangle us; fevers burn us and disorder our minds; physicians overwhelm us with noisome remedies; every noise alarms us, and silence is no less irksome to us: our parents and friends torment us with their officious cares; our children, and those we most love, melt our hearts with tenderness, and their tears force us to weep. But the worst is, the devils are then most active. These infernal

ravens fly about us, endeavouring to fright us. In short, it is then the prince of the power of the air stirs up against us his most furious storms and tempests, to cause us to perish in the very haven. In the midst of so many distractions, and so many threatening waves, it is extremely difficult to possess our souls in peace, to examine our consciences, to hear the voice of God bidding us prepare for death, and keep ourselves from being swallowed up by its terrors.

Old age hath infirmities enough, without defiling it with the sins of youth. For oftentimes it causes more wounds in our soul, than wrinkles in our skin. When the body decays and grows weak, the lusts of the flesh frequently become stronger: and many times when it whitens the head, it blackens the conscience. In a word, the bones of old age are weak enough, and sufficiently full of pain, insomuch that we need not burthen them still more, by overwhelming them with the sins committed in the flower and strength of our age.

Moreover, we know not at what hour, nor in what manner, death will attack us, nor what favour we are to expect at his hands. Perhaps it will not give us the liberty of speaking to our friends, or of examining our consciences; for it sends not always a warning to us, such as that brought by the prophet to good king Hezekiah, *Set thine house in order for thou shalt die*, 2 Kings xx. 1. For as we have already taken notice, it surpriseth us in every age, at every time and place, and in the midst of all manner of employments. The high priest Eli, upon the hearing of unhappy news, fell down backward and brake his neck, 1 Sam. iv. 18. Job's children thought of nothing but of solacing themselves in their feasts and jollity, when the house where they were together, fell down and buried them under its ruins, Job i. But besides these extraordinary accidents, how many are there, whose mouth death closes in an instant, without suffering them to speak a word? How many think themselves in perfect health, and yet suddenly fall down in an apoplexy, or some other more hasty disease, so that they are found dead, sooner than they are known to be sick.

Besides, though we should retain a great share of strength, and could foresee the exact time of our death, yet repentance is not at our command. It is given us from above, and is an especial favour of the Holy Spirit. God works not miracles every day; he bringeth not, at every moment *water, out of the rocks*, Exod. xvii., and *oil out of the flinty rocks*, Deut. xxxii. 13. He grants not the grace to all sinners hardened

in their sins, and confirmed in their apostacy, to turn again from their evil ways, and to be washed with the tears of repentance.

If thou seest a thief repenting at the time of his execution, it is a particular example that abolished not the general rule. By this instance God designs to comfort sinners who truly repent at the end of their days, and to certify them, that his arms are always open to receive them to mercy. I confess, that repentance, provided it be real and sincere, never comes too late ; but I must also affirm, that it can never come too soon. It is most certain, that whenever a sinner repents, God will show him mercy; but that moment is not in our power. For one sinner that repents at the hour of death, there are thousands who die in their impenitency, and to seek no other example but that which Mount Calvary offers to us, if thou seest on one side of Christ a penitent and believing thief, look on the other side, and thou shalt perceive a wretch, who, having spent his days in wickedness and impiety, buries himself, as it were, in his sins, and expires in belching forth horrid blasphemies and reproaches against the king of glory. Moreover, the good thief was converted at the first moment when Christ called upon him, and opened his arms to embrace him. Therefore, to-day, that ye hear the voice of God, harden not your hearts, as in the day of provocation, for fear that God should swear in his wrath, that ye shall not enter into his rest, Psal. xcv. 8—11. Now, at this very instant you read this, *Turn ye unto the Lord your God with all your hearts, and he will have pity and compassion upon you*, Joel ii.

An opportunity once lost is not easily recovered. Therefore painters have represented time with a great lock of hair on the forehead, but all bald behind. *To every thing there is a season*, Eccl. iii. 1. God hath vouchsafed us a time, and hath reserved another for himself ; our time is when we are invited to repentance ; but God's time is when he sends abroad his judgments, and executes his just vengeance. During the space of one hundred and twenty years, Noah, a herald of righteousness, preached repentance to the old world; this was their time ; but when God's patience, justly provoked, was turned into fury, when he sent the deluge of waters that covered the face of the earth, this was God's time, and the day of his righteous vengeance, Gen. vi. When Lot spake to his sons-in-law, to exhort them to go out of Sodom, this was the time of their salvation and deliverance ; but when fire and brimstone overwhelmed and burned them alive, their cries and gnashing of teeth, were as useless as

their scoffs and laughter had before been unjust, Gen. xix. When Esau was selling his birth-right, that was the time to think upon the true and heavenly blessing; but when he had actually sold it for a mess of pottage, all his sighs and tears were as fruitless as his gluttony had been insatiable, and his humour profane, Gen. xxv. and xxvii.; Heb. xii. 16. When the bridegroom was at the door with the dew of his heavenly joys, and the myrrh of his eternal comforts, that was the bride's time, and the opportunity that was offered her to enjoy her holy and unspeakable delights; but when she had delayed a while, unwilling to leave her couch, and put on her coat, he was gone, and it was in vain that she sought him about the city; for instead of the embraces of her beloved, she meets her enemies that beat and wound her, Cant. v. When poor Lazarus begged his bread at the rich man's gate, that was the time when this inhuman wretch should have turned to God, and showed mercy to his fellow creatures; but when he was in hell, in the midst of everlasting flames, it was in vain that he lifted up his eyes to heaven and sought for comfort, Luke xvi. When our Saviour invited the Jews to believe in him, and wept over Jerusalem that had killed the prophets, Matt. xxiii. 37, that was the opportunity of this unhappy nation, that was the time of their salvation, and of God's blessing; but when they had obstinately rejected this great God and Saviour, and desired that his blood might be upon them and their children, God cast them from before his face, and they are even to this day a scorn and reproach amongst all the nations of the earth. Finally, as it is to no purpose that a malefactor resolves to amend his life, when the judge is at the door, and the sergeants have caught him by the throat, or when he is at the gallows, and the hangman ready to strangle him; so it is too late to begin to think upon God when death seizes upon us, and hell opens its jaws to devour us. Miserable man! "Why despiseth thou the riches of God's goodness, and forbearance, and long suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds," Rom. ii. 4, 5, 6.

Certainly our salvation is a matter of too much importance to be neglected, our life too uncertain to admit of delay, and our soul too precious to run the hazard of losing it. Had we many souls we might venture the loss of one; but seeing that we have but one only, and that if it be lost, all the riches and

treasures of the world cannot redeem it, we should watch day and night for its preservation. We should be seized with a holy dread, and carefully avoid whatsoever might cast this our precious soul into the second death, and everlasting damnation.

This is what the Saviour of the world invites and exhorts us to: *Watch*, saith he, *for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come*, Matt. xxiv. 42. *Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*, Matt. xxvi. 41; and this exhortation is so necessary, that he often repeats it, *Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is*, Mark xiii. 33. "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day comes upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man," Luke xxi. 34, 35, 36.

To awaken us from this spiritual lethargy and profane sleep, our blessed Saviour brings the example of the evil servant, who said in his heart, *My Lord delayeth his coming;* and therefore began to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken. Our Saviour adds, "That the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of; and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," Matt. xxiv. 48, &c. To the same purpose is the parable of the foolish virgins, who having fallen asleep without any oil in their lamps, were not surprised at the Bridegroom's coming, that they could not enter into the marriage chamber. It was in vain that they knocked at the gate, crying, *Lord, Lord open to us!* The door would not be opened to them; but they received for answer, *Verily I say unto you, I know you not*, Matt. xxv.

I am very sensible that the first and principal end of all these exhortations and parables, is to teach us how we should be prepared to expect the glorious coming of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; but they may very well be applied to death; for it hath pleased God to keep secret from us, both the day in which he will call us to himself, and that of our Saviour's coming to judgment, that we may be equally prepared and disposed, both for the one and the

other. As we shall be found at the hour of our death, so we shall be judged in that great day, when Christ shall come down from heaven with the angels of his power; and from that judgment there shall be no appeal.

Let us therefore lay aside the sin which doth so easily beset us, Heb. xii. 1; and break all the chains of our filthy lusts. Let us disarm death, and deprive it of its venomous darts and piercing sting. Let us pluck away the claws and teeth of this furious beast, and extinguish all its fires, and it shall no longer be able to terrify us. Let us live the life of saints, and God will give us grace to die the death of the righteous, and that our latter end may be like theirs. Let us live as we shall wish we had lived at that instant, when death shall be upon our lips. Let us live as if we were to die every hour, and as if we heard the voice of God from heaven crying to us, *Come, and appear to judgment.*

And when Satan, the world, and our own flesh, solicit and entice us to evil, let us say within ourselves; Is it thus that thou rewardest the Lord thy God, and acknowledgest all the blessings and favours that thou hast received from his bountiful hand? O fool! dost thou imagine that thou canst go to heaven by walking in the paths of hell? If thou wilfully casteth thyself into the depth of sin, what assurance hast thou of rising again by repentance? If thou forsakest God, art thou not afraid that God will forsake thee? Is it thus that thou preparest thyself for death? Are these the arms with which thou thinkest to encounter it? Art thou fit to approach the divine Majesty, and appear before his tribunal? The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light, Rom. xiii. 12. Let us live as children of God, and heirs of his kingdom. Let us be blameless, and shine as lights in the world, Phil. ii. 15. Let our conversation be as citizens of heaven, from whence also we look for the Lord Jesus, Phil. iii. 20. Let us go to this holy and heavenly Jerusalem, by the way of good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them, Eph. ii. 10. In all our actions, words and thoughts, let there be engraven, *Holiness unto the Lord*, Zech. xiv. 20. Let us show by our deeds that we really believe, with a holy constancy, whatsoever the Scriptures tell us of the everlasting pains of hell, and the unspeakable joys of heaven, Luke xiii. *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith*, Gal. vi. 10. *Redeeming the time, because the days*

are evil, Eph. v. 16. Let us not follow Adam's example, who, for a fruit, pleasant to the eye, and desirable to the taste, lost the paradise which God had given him, Gen. iii. Let us not lose the eternal delights that God hath prepared for us from the foundation of the world, for a moment of carnal pleasure.

Let us imitate the wise virgins, and put oil in our lamps betimes, lest they should go out, Matt. xxv. Let us enrich our hearts with faith, hope and charity, and put on the robes of righteousness and true holiness. As faithful servants of the living God, let us labour with a holy earnestness to finish our task, Matt. xxiv. Let us be steadfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, 1 Cor. xv. 58; that when death shall appear, or rather, when the prince of life shall call us to himself, we may be ready to give him an account of the talents committed to our charge, Matt. xxv.; and may be able to say to him in sincerity and truth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do, John. xvii. 4. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, 2 Tim. iv. 7. O most excellent Lord, I have nothing now to do, but to receive from thy hand the crown of righteousness, which thou hast promised to all those that long for thy appearance. I have nothing to do but to enter into thy glorious rest, where thou embracest in thine infinite mercy all such as overcome sin and death, and keep thy works unto the end, Rev. ii. 26.

X.

Prayer and Meditation for one who prepares for Death by repentance and holiness of life.

O God, who art the Holy of Holies, and holiness itself, it is sin which brought death into the world, and it is sin alone which renders it terrible unto us. Enable me, therefore, I beseech thee, with strength from above, that I may deprive it betimes of its dreadful arms, its fiery darts, and its mortal poison. Since thou hast prepared for me thine heavenly kingdom from the foundation of the world, grant me grace to employ the residue of this life in purging my conscience from dead works, and in sanctifying my soul and body, that I may be in readiness to enter into that holy abode into which no impure thing can be admitted; and to see thy glorious face, which, without holiness, no man can behold. O merciful

Father, discover to my soul, by the light of thine Holy Spirit, the deformity of sin, and its dreadful consequences; that I may abhor and detest it as an infernal monster, Satan's image, and a grievous pollution, that hath defaced in our souls thy blessed resemblance. Let me look upon it as a cursed fire, which hath kindled thy wrath, and consumed the world; as an insupportable burthen under which the whole creation groans, and of which heaven and earth complain: as the execrable murderer of our first parents, and of all men since the foundation of the world; and as the crucifier of the Lord of glory, and the shedder of his precious blood. In short, that I may consider it as our most dangerous enemy, that arms thy vengeance against us, and strives continually to cast us into the abyss of eternal torments. Grant likewise, O Father of mercies, that I may be truly sensible of the beauty of holiness, and the glory that shall crown it; that I may be inflamed with its love, and embrace it with all my affections; that I may look upon it as the daughter of heaven, as the image of thy beauty, and as a ray of thy glory; as a rich jewel stolen from us by Satan; as the sublime perfection of which thy Son Jesus Christ is the pattern; and as the principal part of that happiness after which we aspire, and of which thou wilt give us the full enjoyment in thy holy paradise. O God of my salvation! how bitter are the fruits of sin! Thou art witness to the cruel displeasures I feel, for having served this infamous tyrant so long, and for having sided so much with those carnal lusts which war against the soul. Thou beholdest my sorrow for having made no better use of that life which I received from thy singular bounty, to fear and serve thee, and to obey thy holy and divine commands. What shall I plead in my defence, O Governor of nations! I have sinned against thee, and have done that which is abominable in thy eyes, which are too pure to behold evil; but I repent in dust and ashes. My sins present themselves before me both day and night, and I look upon them with horror. O God, from whose sight nothing is hid, thou seest that my greatest grief proceeds from my not being sufficiently grieved, and that my most piercing affliction is because I am not enough afflicted, and because my repentance is not answerable to the multitude and greatness of my sins. O God, who triest the reins, and searchest all things, thou knowest the nature of my crimes, and what degree of repentance is necessary to obtain pardon. Thou desirest not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his ways and live. Turn me, O Lord, and

I shall be turned. O Almighty God, who bringest water out of the hardest rocks, melt down my heart in tears of repentance, such as may prove acceptable to thee, and worthy to be put in thy bottles. Cleave this heart of stone, and break it in pieces, that thy living waters may enter in on every side. But rather take away this evil heart, and give me a new one, fashioned by thy grace, a heart deeply engraved with the rich features of thy likeness, and shining with the pure lustre reflected from thy presence; a heart burning with zeal for thy glory, and inflamed with thy love. O God of mercies! who hast not spared the blood of thine only Son, to wash out the sentence of mine eternal condemnation, grant me, I beseech thee, thy holy spirit, to sanctify me, and make me a new creature, that I may bear the ensigns and marks of thy children; and that I may shine in the world as a taper lighted by a heavenly fire. Crucify this miserable flesh with all its lusts. Let me live no longer, but let Christ live in me; and graciously vouchsafe, that all the days I have to come, I may pass in the faith of the Son of God, who hath loved me, and hath given himself for me, that he might redeem and cleanse me from all my sins. Be thou the soul of my soul, the light of my understanding, and the director of my life. Reign in me, and possess me in such a manner, that all my affections, words and thoughts, may be sanctified by thy grace, and tend only to thy glory. Let me not only detest all things which I know to be displeasing to thee, but likewise avoid all those in which I am not well assured thou takest pleasure. That I may not only abhor the defilement of vice, but that I may also hate a garment spotted with the least sin, and that I may abstain from all appearance of evil. If the devil, the world, or my own flesh, solicit and entice me to any sin, let me be seized with the awe of thy divine majesty; let death present itself to my thoughts, and restrain and stop me with a holy fear. Let me remember that I shall be the most miserable of all creatures, if I should die offending thee, and bury myself in my sins; and let me never forget that *blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power.* Since thy grace, which is saving health to all men, is so clearly revealed to me, grant that, renouncing all impiety and worldly lusts, I may live soberly, righteously and godly in this present life. That I may apply myself continually to *whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are*

lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, and, in general, to whatsoever things are virtuous and worthy of praise. And, above all things, that I may be fervent in charity, and unwearied in good works, seeing thou takest pleasure in such sacrifices, and that *charity covers a multitude of sins.* O Lord, the task which thou hast set me is long, and my life short, neither know I at what hour thou wilt knock at the door of mine house. O God whose tender mercies are forever, set my heart to love thy commands, and then command what thou pleasest. Work in me, with efficacy, both to will and to do of thy good pleasure. Grant me grace to be employed in thy work with so much diligence, fidelity and earnestness, that I may not be ashamed at thy coming. Give me the lamp of the sanctuary, lighted at the beams of the Sun of Righteousness. Fill my heart with the precious and divine oil of thy spirit, and clothe me with a robe of holiness and light, that I may be ready to follow the bridegroom into the marriage-chamber, and to sit down together with the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, the martyrs, &c. Let me live the life of the saints, and die the death of the righteous, that I may be received among the blessed into thy glorious rest; and that when I breathe forth the last sigh, thy holy son Jesus may receive and welcome my soul, with a *Come, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Amen.*

CHAPTER XII.

The sixth remedy against the Fears of Death, is, to rely upon God's good providence.

THERE are some persons so stupid and brutish, that they never bestow a thought upon the great end of their creation, and are not able to give any account wherefore God hath sent them into the world; carnal and earthly minds, who imagine that they were created merely for themselves, and who live as the brute beasts, only to eat and to drink. Such are those mentioned by St Paul, *whose God is their belly, and whose end is destruction,* Phil. iii. 19. But there are also others so wise and virtuous, that they are continually meditating upon the favours they receive from heaven, which they em-

ploy to their right and proper use; heavenly minds enlightened from above, who consider with a true Christian spirit, that they are not born for themselves, but for their country, their relations and friends, and above all, to serve God and his church. Therefore, they desire to live, in order to glorify their Creator, and advance his kingdom.

This desire, when it is well governed, is certainly very acceptable to God, as a sweet smelling sacrifice. Such was David's pathetic wish, in Psalm cxix. *Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee.* It was the same holy zeal which forced so many bitter tears from king Hezekiah in his dangerous illness, and caused him to entreat so passionately to live yet longer in the world. This wise and religious prince foresaw the dreadful evils, the grievous confusion, and the abominable idolatries that were likely to prevail after his death, in the kingdom of Judah. He was therefore very earnest to glorify God upon earth, and to accomplish the reformation which he had begun. He desired to have children whom he might teach to fear God with all their hearts, and to serve him according to his holy and divine will, that he might cause piety to become hereditary in his royal house. These pious breathings of his soul he manifests in that divine hymn, which he sung unto God after his miraculous recovery. Behold (saith he), for peace I had great bitterness; but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption; for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back. For the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth. The Lord was ready to save me: therefore we will sing my songs all the days of our life in the house of the Lord, Isaiah xxxviii. 17, 18, 19, 20. We find the same holy ardour inflaming the heart of St Paul; for when he considers himself, and the calamities of this life, and looks up to the eternal happiness that reigns in heaven, he desires to depart out of this earthly tabernacle, and to be with Christ, which he knows to be far better, and the most for his advantage. But when he casts his eyes upon the church of Christ, his charity is so fervent for the good of his brethren, that he prefers their comfort and joy to his own felicity and repose. It is (saith he) more needful for you that I abide in the flesh. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of faith, Phil. i. 24, 25.

This desire of life, with an intention of glorifying God, is in itself good and holy. But it is too apt to transgress its bounds, and become vicious; for very often it mingles imperceptibly with the love of ourselves, and, by that means, hinders us from meeting death with a becoming resolution.

For example, when a great prince, inspired with a heroical virtue, is engaged in a war for the preservation of his subjects, and for the delivery of many afflicted people from the oppressions of tyranny; if God blesses his arms, and causes his glorious designs to succeed, he will be extremely mortified, if death, at that instant, breaks in pieces his victorious arm, puts an end to his conquests, and casts his crown to the ground. He will complain within himself: Must I now abandon my noble and generous enterprise? Must I stop in the midst of such a glorious race? Must death bury, with my body, the expectations of so many brave people? Alas! I am afraid that all my trophies will vanish with my breath. I have just cause to apprehend, that my fall will draw after it that of a multitude of poor people that rely upon me; and that those chains of tyranny which I have begun to break, will unite again, become stronger and more insupportable. O death! how cruel is thy stroke! by taking away my life, thou draggest my friends to execution; and the arrows which thou strikest in my bosom pierce millions of innocent souls.

Likewise he that is promoted by his prince to the rank of a viceroy or lieutenant, or to the government of some rich province or place of importance, will be sensibly grieved, if death comes to snatch him away in the midst of his most urgent affairs; especially if it be in troublesome times, and if he sees none of a sufficient ability to succeed him. Must I quit so soon, will he say, this honourable employment? Must I so quickly forsake my prince's service, and leave so many poor people as sheep without a shepherd? O death! how detestable art thou in delighting to bring all things into confusion and trouble!

Thus the general of an army, who, with a true Christian courage, carries on a successful war for the service of his prince and country, cannot but complain against death, when he comes to subdue him before he hath totally subdued and overcome his enemies; especially if the times are so unhappy, that he knows of no one duly qualified to succeed him in his high office. Must I leave, will he say, all my glorious designs? Must I forsake my faithful soldiers, and abandon them

to the mercy of their enemies, or to the capricious humour of an inexperienced successor? O death! full of cruel envy! wilt thou so soon snatch this conquering sword out of my hand, and cut off, with one blow of thy scythe, so many great expectations?

In the same manner, he that is preferred to the highest offices of civil judicature, such as a president, a counsellor, or any other chief magistrate, will doubtless have his heart filled with bitterness, if death comes and deprives him of his honours in the flower of his age; especially if he has reason to fear, that he shall leave none to succeed him but men of corrupt principles, whited walls, Acts xxiii. 3. Must I, will he say, leave so soon this honourable office, in which I took so much delight? O inexorable death! why dost thou not suffer me to wear my purple, till such time as I shall be weary to bear it? Why dost thou not permit me to sit upon this venerable seat, till I fall off through old age?

Likewise a faithful minister of the gospel, who sees the work of the Lord prosper in his hands, Satan, as lightning fall from heaven, Luke x. 18, and Dagon brought upon his face to the ground, 1 Sam. v., will, without doubt, be astonished at death's approach, and complain in this manner: Must I so soon leave the exercise of this holy function, in which I placed my greatest delight? Must I break off from this sacred work, by which I so happily advanced the glory of God? I am afraid that after my departing, grievous wolves will enter in among the Lord's flock, Acts xx. 29; and that a terrible night of darkness will overshadow our posterity.

Thus the father of a family, who passionately loves his wife and children, can never look upon death but he will feel all his bowels disturbed, and his heart rent asunder with grief. He will sigh out such expostulations as these: Must I forsake a poor forlorn wife, drowned in tears? Must I abandon my tender-hearted parents, whose life was bound up in mine, and who will find my death an inconsolable affliction? Must I leave my dear children, whom I love as my soul? Must I leave them without a guide, and in danger, not only of losing the small temporal means that I have provided for them, but also in danger of being overcome by the vicious customs of the age, and enticed to idolatry and superstition.

That we may be able to govern this violent passion, than which perhaps there is none more predominant in the mind of man, the best and most salutary course we can take is, to

learn betimes to rest all our confidence upon the good providence of our heavenly Father. Christian souls, meditate upon the excellent saying in Psalm xxxvii., Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass; and upon that in Psalm lv., Cast thy burthen upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee. Forget not likewise this blessed exhortation of the apostle St Peter, *Cast all your care upon God, for he careth for you*, 1 Pet. v. 7. Engrave in your minds this comfortable maxim of St Paul, *All things work together for good to them that love God*, Rom. viii. 28. And plant deeply in your hearts the holy magnanimity of that great apostle: According to my earnest expectation, and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death, Phil. i. 20.

Thou desirest to be instrumental in serving God and the public. It is an excellent desire, and truly laudable: but it belongs to God to appoint the service that he will receive from thee, and that which thou must render to thy neighbour. It belongs to him to prescribe to thee thy tasks, and set the bounds of thy course. He knows what time he will employ thee, and how long thou hast to fight. Is thine eye evil, because thy God is good and gracious to thee, and is pleased to shorten thy fatigue and trouble? All such as cheerfully follow the banner of the Lord of hosts, and withdraw not themselves, till the signal of retreat is given by the general of heaven and earth, shall enjoy a blessed victory, and obtain the honour of a triumph, as well the novice just enrolled, as the old soldier whose head is grown white under his helmet. All such as labour faithfully in the Lord's vineyard, shall receive from him an eternal recompense; as well he that continues but an hour, as he that hath borne the burthen and heat of the day, Matt. xx. Whether thou hast gone but a few steps in the paths of righteousness, or whether thou hast walked in them many years, thy God is so munificent and liberal, that he will reward thee with an incorruptible crown of glory.

Great princes, who pay to the King of Kings a religious homage, and seek your greatest glory in the cross of Christ, submit yourselves, with an entire resignation, to the divine will of your universal Monarch; for as the lives of all men are disposed by his wise providence, so, in a particular manner, he holds dear and precious the lives of kings and princes, who are the sons of his right hand. Therefore, while it is expedient for his glory, and their good, that they should live

upon earth, he placeth round about their sacred persons his holy angels, and encompasseth them with a wall of fire. Remember that as soon as the king of Israel was seated upon his throne, God commanded him to take in hand the book of his law, and to read therein all the days of his life, Deut. xvii. Ask from him that wisdom and prudence that are requisite to govern such a people, and beseech him to grant unto you that strength and virtue that are necessary to support so weighty a burthen. Let the sword that he hath entrusted in your hands, be employed to do justice upon offenders, and to protect the innocent, Rom. xiii. As you are the living images of God's sovereign authority over his creatures, endeavour likewise after the glorious resemblance of his goodness and mercy, and imitate him, who resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble, James iv. 6 ; 1 Pet. v. 5. Behave in such a manner, that your subjects may cherish and honour you as their common father, obey and serve you as their lord, and fear and respect you as their king. Suffer not your heart to be puffed up with pride, when you behold the large countries which God hath subjected to your command, and the people that he hath put under your power and protection. But lift up your eyes to the spacious heavens, take a view of their vast extent, and see how the whole earth is no more than an inconsiderable point, in comparison of them. And think upon God, before whom all nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance, Isa. xl. 15. Consider, that your subjects are creatures that God hath made after his own likeness, and redeemed by the death of his Son; and that after this life they are to reign with you for ever in heaven. Remember, that the more God has entrusted to your charge, the greater will be the account you must render to him ; and that you must one day appear before his awful tribunal, without sceptre or crown, like other wretched sinners, to implore his mercy. Search into yourselves, and examine what you are; your bodies are subject to wounds, infirmities and diseases, like that of the meanest of your servants; your souls are affected with the same passions, and slaves to the same lusts. In short, you came into the world in the same manner as the most miserable of your subjects, and your departure shall be like his. So that if a crowd of flatterers cry to you, as they did to Herod, *It is the voice of a god, and not of man,* Acts xii. 22 ; hear what the true God speaks to you from heaven, *I have said, ye are Gods; and all of you are children of the Most High. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes,* Psal.

lxxxii. 6, 7. While God shall preserve you in the world, employ your blood, sweat, and all the strength and power that God hath put into your hands, for the good and advantage of your kingdom, and for the defence and preservation of your people that are sheltered under your wings. And if, in the midst of your greatest and most flourishing prosperities, death presents himself before your eyes, let fall the sceptre willingly, and joining your hands together, adore the King of the whole earth. Grieve not for the loss of worldly glory, which passeth away as the lightning, seeing God hath promised you another, that shall be more lasting than the light of the sun; for if you can but overcome death, and yourselves, he will grant you to sit with him in his throne, Rev. iii. 21; and will give you a kingdom which cannot be moved, Heb. xii. 28.

Wise and religious princes, be not anxious for the things that shall happen after your decease. He by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice, Prov. viii. 15, is sufficiently able, out of the abundant treasures of his goodness, to enrich your successor with all the graces and qualities that become a powerful prince. It may be that he will bestow upon him more glory and happiness than upon yourself. When king David had ended his mortal race, and God had taken him into his rest, it seemed at first, that the loss of so good a prince could not be repaired; but God caused Solomon to ascend his father's throne, and made him the wisest and most happy monarch in the world. David did but remove God's ark, but Solomon built for it a stately and magnificent temple. David was a type of the encounters and victories of the Son of God, but Solomon was a lively image of his glorious triumphs, and of that eternal peace with which he shall crown his chosen in the kingdom of heaven.

What if you leave your children under age? Be not cast down, for God will preserve them as the signet upon his right hand, or as the apple of his eye. Think upon Josiah, who was but eight years of age when he succeeded to the kingdom of Judah; and yet there never was a prince more pious and devout, nor one that merited more of the church of God, 2 Kings xxii. And, still further to strengthen your faith, and confirm your glorious expectation, meditate upon the history of Joash, who was but one year old when his father was cruelly slain; and what was still more deplorable, an infernal fury, his own grandmother, sought to destroy him; but, in the midst of a multitude of unnatural tragedies, God preserved him alive by a miracle, and placed him in a

triumphant manner upon the throne of his father, 2 Kings xi. Seeing, therefore, that such is the pleasure of him who gives and takes away crowns, cheerfully leave this corruptible and perishing one, to receive another that is incorruptible and immortal.

You also, who have the honour to represent kings and princes, the noble governors of their provinces and forts, remember that this dignity comes not only from the appointment of your masters, but from God himself, who holds in his hands the hearts of all the kings and princes of the earth. Remember what our Saviour said to the governor of Judea, *Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above,* John xix. 11. Let all the world acknowledge from your behaviour, that piety towards God, is the surest pledge of loyalty to your prince. Take heed that you abuse not your authority to gratify your revenge, or to content your vanity or avarice. Protect not the guilty, and oppress not the innocent; seeing you are appointed to execute wrath upon them that do evil, and for the praise of them that do good, Rom. xiii. Behave yourselves as if you were always in the sight of your prince; or rather, behave yourselves as in the presence of Almighty God, before whom all things are naked and open, and as if you were just going to give him an account of your stewardship. If, while you are thus happily employed in the service of your prince and country, death comes to interrupt your prosperity, yield yourselves without resistance to the wise conduct of him who is both your Sovereign Lord and theirs, to whom you are subject here on earth.

Vex not your souls about what shall happen after your death: nor fondly imagine that there are none worthy and able to succeed you in your employments. When God is pleased to bless and favour kings, and to cause their kingdoms to flourish, he raiseth them up faithful ministers and wise counsellors; as when he gave a Joseph to Pharaoh, Gen. xli.; and Eliakim to Hezekiah, Isa. xxii.; and a Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. ii. When he pleaseth to search into his inexhaustible treasures, he never fails to find men after his own heart, adorned with all the great qualities requisite for a worthy discharge of such a glorious employ. In the mean while, if thou canst overcome Satan, sin, the world and death, thou shalt go and take possession of a far greater and more lasting glory. He that hath on his vesture, and on his thigh a name written, *King of kings and Lord of lords,* Rev. xix. 16, hath given you an unchangeable promise in these

divine words, *He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron*, Rev. ii. 26, 27.

August senators, wise judges, and you inferior magistrates, have always before your eyes, and engrave in the bottom of your hearts, what Jehoshaphat said to the judges of his kingdom: "Take heed what ye do, for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment. Wherefore now let the fear of the Lord be upon you: take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts," 2 Chron. xix. 6, 7. Whensoever ye go to take your seat in the assemblies of justice, remember that God presides in that place, and that he sits there upon his throne, and every time that you give a charge, or pronounce a sentence, consider, that you are in God's presence, and that he observes, not only your words and actions, but likewise every motion of your heart, and that he reads your most secret thoughts. Judge with the same justice and equity with which you desire to be judged. If you are tempted to pervert judgment, to misrepresent the truth, or to commit any act of injustice, either through a criminal complaisance, the expectation of worldly advantage, or for filthy lucre, remember it is the devil that tempts you; and pray to God to deliver you from the wicked one. And that you may be the better able to restrain yourselves with a holy fear, imagine that death summons you to appear in person; nay, drags you before the sovereign judge of the world, to give an account of all your actions, and the sentences that you have given. But if death surprises you while you are discharging your office with all due diligence and integrity, stay not till it forces you, but cheerfully put off the robes of a judge, to take the habit of a suppliant, and pray to God that he will *not enter into judgment with his servant; for in his sight shall no man living be justified*, Psal. cxliii. 2.

Let not the thoughts of what may happen after your decease obstruct your holy and Christian resolution. There are persons enough in the world of abilities sufficient to supply your places; and God is able to raise up others that we dream not of; as when he created in one day seventy elders in Israel, whom he endowed with the gifts and graces of his Spirit, Numbers xi. He can bring forth from his treasures such as will be no less righteous and incorrupt than yourselves, and who, perhaps, may be enlightened with greater wisdom and discretion. Come down, therefore, willingly from these seats of justice, so beset with thorns,

that if you truly fear God, you can never sit upon them without trembling, and go with boldness unto the throne of grace *that ye may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*, Heb. iv. 16.

And as there may be as much real piety in the tents of David as in the temple of Solomon, and as the sword of Gideon and sword of the Lord is one, Judg. vii. 18, I also address myself to you, worthy generals, brave captains and generous commanders, unto whom kings, princes and commonwealths commit the leading of their armies. I speak not to you, profane scoffers, who laugh at the sacred mysteries, and are of opinion, that all fear of God should be banished out of your troops, and that the most profligate wretches make the best soldiers, but I speak to you, Christian and religious souls, who, being commanders over men, forget not that you are the soldiers of Jesus Christ, who, though you wear at your sides a material sword, neglected not the holy use of the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God that dwells in your hearts, Eph. vi. 17. Neither speak I to you that enter into war, with an intent only to satisfy your revenge, ambition or avarice; but I speak to you, brave and worthy captains, who have purified your weapons in a heavenly fire, who wage war only to procure a more lasting peace to the public, and fight only to serve your prince and country; to you who are the real bulwarks of states and empires, by whose vigilance men sleep in security. Let the whole world see, by experience in your persons, that nothing accords better with true courage than the fear of God. Behave yourselves always as in the sight of your Creator, who is ever present with you, and accompanies you in all your actions. Remember that he commanded to put away all uncleanness from the camp of Israel, because of his holy presence, Deut. xxiii. If you will, therefore, draw down his blessings on your persons and designs, cast out of your armies the uncleanness of vice, and punish, without pity, rapes, burnings, impiety and blasphemy. Cause your soldiers to put in practice St John the Baptist's most excellent lesson to the military men of his time, who demanded of him what they should do to be saved: *Do violence*, says he, *to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages*, Luke iii. 14. Live as lambs, and fight like lions; spare, as much as possible, the blood of your own soldiers; and when you shed that of your enemies, let it be with regret; for they are God's creatures, and bear after a sort his sacred image. Never confide in your own

valour and experience; but remember it is God that gives courage, that strengthens the hand in the day of battle, and that causes fear and terror to seize which side he pleases. Keep always in view David's example; there never was a captain more courageous, nor more ready to expose his life; and yet there never was a person more zealous in prayer to God, more resigned to his will, nor more careful to return him the praises of all his advantages. If it happens that death comes to put a stop to your victories, or calls you away in a time when your prudence and courage seem the most necessary, be not astonished at it. Consider, that by this means God offers you the occasion of a more glorious victory, a more magnificent triumph: for the victory over millions of mortal men, or over the whole world, is nothing in comparison to the victory over death and hell. Inquire not, out of a sinful distrust of providence, who shall succeed you in the conduct of your army. He who is able of the very stones to raise up children unto Abraham, Matt. iii. 9, can also raise up from thence captains and soldiers. When he pleaseth to humble the pride of his enemies, and to deliver his people from their tyranny, he raiseth up Gideons, Jephthahs, Sampsons, and such like extraordinary commanders. Who knows but he will cause a general to succeed you, who, if not of more courage and generosity, may perhaps have better fortune and more glorious success? When he took Moses to his rest, he set up Joshua in his stead, whom he endowed with a noble spirit of wisdom and courage. For one enemy that Moses overcame, Joshua subdued his thousands. Whereas Moses wandered up and down the wilderness, and only coasted along the land of Canaan; Joshua brought the children of Israel into that charming country, and gave them peaceable possession of it. Since, therefore, it is God's pleasure, leave to others the care of temporal wars, and go gather the pleasant and delicious fruits of that eternal peace which hath been purchased for you by the blood of the Son of God.

Faithful minister of Jesus Christ, show an example of that resignation, which thou teachest to others. Let not death cause thee to draw back. Thou art willing to glorify God upon earth; consider, my brother, that thou wilt glorify him much better in heaven, with more zeal and less interruption. Whilst thou continuest in the fetters of this sinful flesh, thy ministry must needs be attended with many imperfections. Thou imaginest, that if it pleases God to prolong thy days, thou mayest be of singular use to reform the world; but

thou deceivest thyself, my brother; for the world is grown old in sin, and this age is hardened in iniquity. Preach to the people as long as thou wilt, it shall be as in the times of Noah, the preacher of righteousness, when the long suffering of God waited for the conversion of the disobedient, 1 Pet. iii. 20: For all flesh hath corrupted his way upon the earth; and every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually, Gen. vi. 5, 12. Our thoughts are perverse and rebellious from the cradle; and was not God to interpose by his Almighty power, and the virtue of his Holy Spirit, they would grow worse and worse, until we drop into the grave. If thou afflict thy righteous soul ever so much, and waste thyself in exhorting the greatest sinners to fly from the wrath to come, and the judgments of God that hang over their guilty heads, thou wilt be mocked for thy pains, and perhaps by thy nearest relations, as Lot was by his sons-in-law, Gen. xix. Though thou shouldst thunder out the threatenings of God's law against the abominations of Israel, with as much zeal as the prophet Isaiah, thou shalt be forced at last to acknowledge, *I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought*, Isa. xlix. 4. Though thine eyes were a fountain of tears, and thou shouldst spend the days and nights in calling upon the superstitious and idolaters to forsake their false worship, thou wouldst not be able to soften the hardness of their hearts, nor overcome their obstinacy. They will say to thee, as the Jews to the prophet Jeremiah, "As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem; for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil," Jer. xliv. 16, 17. Though thou wert the mouth of God himself, and thy lips uttered the wisdom of eternity, thou wouldst find good cause to cry out, *Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* Isa. liii. 1; John xii. 38. In short, as the rivers of fresh water that run continually into the sea, cannot alter its saline taste; thus thy holy and exemplary life, thy learned and pious sermons, will not be able to remedy the corruption of this wicked age, nor to stop the torrent, and prevent the overflowing of vice: for thy labour and industry, if compared with the corruption of the world, are more inconsiderable

than a drop of water in comparison to the ocean. This cursed earth may be watered with thy sweat and tears, nevertheless it will bring forth nothing but thorns and briers, Heb. vi. 8. The weeds which thou takest so much pains to pluck up, will tear thy skin, and draw blood from thy hands. So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth: but God that giveth the increase, 1 Cor. iii. 7.

There is reason to fear, that by staying any longer in this contagious air, thou mayest receive some impressions of its malignancy, and be involved in the general corruption; that by handling so many wounds and sores, thou mayest sully the purity of thy hands: and that the thorns of this cursed earth may pluck off the wool of thy meek and lamb-like life.

But though thou shouldst have a thousand times more gifts and graces, and thy labours should bring far greater advantages to the edification of the church, it belongs not to thee to prescribe laws to thy God, but to obey his will. Leave to him the chief care of his own household, and put thy trust in his eternal providence. He hath more interest in the preservation of the church than thou canst pretend to, seeing it concerns the glory of his holy name, and the salvation of his dear children. If any one provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel, 1 Tim. v. 8. And shall God, who abideth faithful, who is the fountain of truth, and cannot deny himself, 2 Tim. ii. 13; whose gifts and calling are without repentance, Rom. xi. 29, abandon the care of his church, which he loves with an everlasting love, Jer. xxxi. 3, and cherisheth as the apple of his eye? Zech. ii. 8. This Father of mercies, *who spared not his own SON, but delivered him up for the church, how shall he not with him also freely give her all things?* Rom. viii. 32. He knows better than thou, and all the men in the world, what is proper and advantageous for his holy family, and for every member that composes it. He knows how to provide for all its wants, for his wisdom is infinite, and his providence no less to be admired.

When this great God hath a design to punish his enemies, and to manifest his justice, he hath always fit agents ready, and his quiver is never destitute of arrows. As soon as he commands the angels that stand before him to thrust in their sickles and reap, or to pour out the phials of his wrath upon the earth, these holy spirits fly with an unspeakable swiftness to execute his sacred pleasure, Rev. xiv. and xvi. Like-

wise, when he intends to do good to his children, he finds in every place the messengers of peace, and his hand is always full of blessings. As the ocean of his wonderful mercies can never be dried up, so the channels by which he conveys them to us shall never fail.

The very cause of thy affliction should serve to appease thy grief, to cherish thy faith, and increase thy hopes; for if thou art endowed with extraordinary gifts, this proceeds not from thy nature, nor from thine industry, but from the favour and bounty of God. Now, his hand is not shortened, Isa. l. 2; his power lessened, or the fountain of his blessings and wonders dried up. He that makes the field white unto harvest, John iv. 35, can send into it his reapers whensoever he pleaseth. In these latter times, in this old age of the world, as well as in the infancy of his church, he finds labourers to work in the vineyard; or rather, he forms and fashions them with the hand of his grace, and enables them with his Holy Spirit, for it is he that hath made man's mouth, that maketh the dumb, and deaf, and the seeing, and the blind, Exod. iv. 11, *that calleth those things which be not, as though they were*, Rom. iv. 17.

When he will have a tabernacle erected to himself, he calls by name a Bezaleel, and fills him with his spirit in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, Exod. xxxi. 2, 3. When he is pleased to deliver the children of Israel from their Babylonish captivity, and to build again the temple of Jerusalem, he hath at his command a Cyrus, a Darius and an Artaxerxes; he raises up a Zerubbabel, an Ezra and a Nehemiah. Thus, when he intends to repair the breaches of his house, and to advance the kingdom of his blessed Son, he raises up proper servants, and bestows upon them the necessary graces for such a noble work. As he hath never left himself without witness, in that he doth good; so he hath never been without witnesses to declare his holy truth. *Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings he perfects his praise*, Matt. xxi. 16; and as our Saviour told the Jews, *If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out*, Luke xix. 40. God will take the pillars of the idol's temple to support his church, rather than suffer it to fall to ruin. He will change the wolves into lambs, and the lambs into shepherds, rather than his sheep shall want their pastor. "He hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are

despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought the things that are," 1 Cor. i. 27, 28.

God not only never leaves his church without some testimony of his favour, some instrument of his grace; but many times, when he removes one good thing from us, it is in order to bestow upon us something more rare and excellent.

This consideration rejoiced the heart of Joseph upon his death bed; as appears by what he said to his brethren, *I die, and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land, unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob*, Gen. l. 24. And accordingly it came to pass: for instead of a Joseph, who had been the occasion of their bondage, God raised up a Moses, who delivered them with a strong hand, and stretched out arm. God took up Elijah in a chariot of fire, but he gave unto Elisha a double portion of his master's spirit, and caused the glory of his miracles to shine forth, 2 Kings ii. Our Lord and Saviour, when he had finished the great work of our redemption, ascended into heaven, a cloud receiving him up to the throne of his glory; but according to his divine promise, he hath not left us destitute, but hath sent us the Comforter, *that he may abide with us forever; even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world seeth not, neither knoweth*, John xiv. 16, 17. Christ's bodily presence was enjoyed but by a small number; but his Spirit is like a river that overflows on every side, John vii. 38. This divine Spirit is not only with us, but also within us, being shed abroad in our hearts. He seals us for the day of redemption, Eph. iv. 30; and is the earnest of our inheritance, until the full consummation of the glory reserved for us in heaven, Eph. i. 14. Therefore, when this merciful Saviour saw his apostles greatly afflicted for his leaving the world, he speaks to them in this manner: Because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your hearts. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you, John xvi. 6, 7. When St Paul took his last farewell of the elders and people of the church of Ephesus, they all wept sore, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, *that they should see his face no more*, Acts xx. 37, 38. But to comfort them, he assures them, that in heaven they have a Father and protector, and such a shepherd as will never forsake them: I commend you, says he, to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified, ver. 32. O

man of God, lay up these things in thy heart! If the Lord, who hath called thee to the sacred function of the ministry, is pleased to continue thee in the world, labour with courage in thy holy employment, and be not tired in the service of so good a master, so merciful a Saviour. *Fight the good fight of faith*, 1 Tim. vi. 12. *Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ*, 2 Tim. ii. 3. Show not a less earnest care for the Lord's sheep, than Jacob for those of Laban. Hear what this holy patriarch professes of himself: In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes, Gen. xxxi. 40. Jacob patiently endured all this labour and distress, and the years of his servitude seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to Rachael, Gen. xxix. 20. In the same manner, thou wilt joyfully endure all the fatigues of thine office, and bear with patience all the hardships, if thou sincerely lovest the Lord Jesus and his heavenly bride; if thou respectest the salvation of souls, for whom Jesus Christ hath suffered death; and if thou hast well weighed the excellency of thine own reward, and the glory prepared for thee, when thou shalt have finished the time of thy painful service and severe trial. For they that turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever, Dan. xii. 3. Jacob had to do with an unfaithful and deceitful man; but God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent, Numbers xxiii. 19. Be thou faithful unto death, and he will give thee a crown of life, Rev. ii. 10.

If it be the Lord's pleasure to lessen this task; if, instead of employing thee in his vineyard, he will take thee to drink of the new wine of his kingdom; if, when thou thinkest to sow in tears, he causes thee to reap with songs of joy; if, instead of the contradiction which thou sufferest from sinners, he will grant to thee his eternal consolations, and receive thee into the harmonious society of the church triumphant, adore his goodness and his infinite mercy. Cast thyself into his arms, and resolve cheerfully to will what is pleasing to him. If, during thy abode in this valley of tears, God hath provided for thee, and thou hast found all thy joy, satisfaction and comfort in him, death will be thy advantage; for in this same Saviour thou shalt find thy rest, glory and eternal happiness. Meditate often upon these excellent words of the apostle, "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of

a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away," 1 Pet. v. 1, 2, 3, 4.

You also, who are afraid to leave behind you an afflicted and desolate widow, come and learn this lesson, to rely upon the goodness and tender compassions of the Father of Mercies, *who comforteth us in all our tribulations*, 2 Cor. i. 4; and *is nigh unto all them that call upon him*, Psal. cxlv. 18. He favours the widow in such an especial manner, that he calls himself *the judge of the widows*, Psal. lxviii. 5; that is, the guardian of their innocence, the protector of their right, and the severe revenger of the wrongs that are offered them. Therefore, in another place, he expressly tells us, *that he established the border of the widow*, Prov. xv. 25. If Job *caused the widow's heart to sing for joy*, Job xxix. 13; how much more shall God fill her heart with ravishing delights, with the sweet and effectual consolations of his Holy Spirit? I speak not of those foolish widows who mind nothing but worldly pleasures and carnal pastimes, who run into all the fopperies of the age, and are dead whilst they live, 1 Tim. v. 6; but I speak of those wise widows, who being left desolate, trust in God, and continue in supplications and prayers night and day.

Our great God and merciful Lord, hath not only declared in general, that he is the judge, protector and comforter of widows, but he hath also been pleased to extend unto some his most signal favours and extraordinary blessings. In the reign of king Ahab, while a cruel famine prevailed in the land, God sent the prophet Elijah to a poor widow of Zarephath, who was preparing herself to die with her son, as soon as they had eaten up a handful of meal, and a little oil that was left. But the holy prophet comforted her with these words: Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruise of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth, 1 Kings xvii. 14. Many poor widows have experienced the like miracle; for, by a secret benediction, God hath caused their provisions not to fail. Though they have not enjoyed any extraordinary plenty, this all-wise purveyor hath furnished them with the necessaries of life; so that not only they and their children have subsisted in times of the greatest scarcity, but they have also had the honour of assisting God's prophets. Like the poor widow mentioned in the gospel, out of their penury they have given alms, Luke

xxi. 4; and their mites have been more pleasing unto God than the treasures of the rich. Moreover, when the Son of God was in the world, he was pleased to manifest the care and tender concern he hath for widows; for when he met nigh the gate of the city of Nain, a poor widow that wept bitterly for her only son, who was carried out to be buried, he had compassion on her, raised the young man to life again, and delivered him to his mother, Luke vii. It was also at the request of some devout widows that St Peter raised Dorcas, Acts ix.

I must not forget in this place a noble providence, proper to comfort every faithful servant of God. The widow of one of the sons of the prophets, in the bitterness of her soul, cried out unto Elisha: Thy servant my husband is dead, and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord; and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen, 2 Kings iv. 1. God, who hears the cry of the afflicted, had compassion on this poor widow, and by the means of Elisha, miraculously gave her wherewith to pay her debts, and to support her family. By this glorious example, God assures his prophets of the tender care he will take of their widows, provided they walk in his fear, and continue in his holy covenant.

To conclude, both ancient and modern histories are full of illustrious examples of wise and virtuous widows, who have directly governed their families, and upon whom the blessing of God hath visibly rested.

God, who is so wonderful in all his works, not only causeth fathers to provide for their children, but to some he likewise gives in his mercy, such children as become fathers to their fathers, and a blessing to their family, as Joseph was to Jacob and his household. Such wise and virtuous children, knowing how necessary they are to their parents, whom they cherish and honour, may, out of a blind affection for them, tremble at death, and say unto it, in the language of the young man in the gospel, *Suffer me first to go and bury my father*, Matt. viii. 21. Let me alone a little longer in the world, suffer me to live, and administer to the necessities of my aged parents, till I have paid them the last duties, and closed their eyes. But hearken what the Lord saith unto thee, *Let the dead bury their dead, follow thou me.* Leave to them that remain behind thee the cares of worldly concerns, but do thou obey God's call. Thy charity to others must not make thee cruel to thyself, and disobedient to God's command. Fear not to leave any earthly friends to go to meet thy heavenly bridegroom, and to cast

thyself into the arms of the Father of spirits. God who hath given, or rather who hath lent thee unto them, who caused them to subsist before thou was born, can feed and bless them without thee. His mercy is not confined to thy person or industry. When our Lord and Saviour was upon the cross, seeing the blessed virgin and the disciple whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, *Woman, behold thy Son*, and to St John, *Behold thy mother. And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home*, John xix. 26, 27. In like manner, when God calls unto his eternal rest him who, like Joseph, was the supporter of his family, he provides for them, in his adorable providence, some other way. In short, if Elkanah had reason to say to his wife, when she wept because she had no child, Am not I better to thee than ten sons? 1 Sam. i. 8; we may with much more justice affirm, that the grace of God, his divine assistance, and the consolations of his Holy Spirit, are better to us than ten thousand of the best and most dutiful children.

The strongest passion, and that which seems the most capable to detain a Christian soul, is the affection which fathers and mothers bear to their children, especially if they leave them in an age unable to help themselves. But lest this natural passion should transport you beyond the bounds of reason and piety, consider well the promise that God made to Abraham: I will be a God unto thee and unto thy seed after thee, Gen. xvii. 7; and what St Peter told the Jews: The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off: even as many as the Lord our God shall call, Acts ii. 39. Above all, hear attentively, and engrave in the bottom of your hearts, that which God speaks to you from heaven by the prophet Jeremiah: Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me, chap. xlix. 11.

God is the father of us all, but more especially he is the father of the fatherless, Psal. cxlvi. He hath compassion on them, and provides for all their wants. Thy children are nearer to him than to thee; for thou art but a feeble instrument which he made use of to bring them into the world, but he is the Creator of their souls, the Maker of their bodies, and the Redeemer of both. He loves them with a greater and more lasting love than the best fathers, and the most tender-hearted mothers: therefore he assures us by his holy prophet, that though a woman forget her suckling child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb; yet he will not forget us, Isa. xlix. 15. So that all those

children that fear God, and worship him, may say with David: When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up, Psal. xxvii. 10.

If Job had a tender care of the fatherless, Job xxxi. 17, 21, and Pharaoh's daughter had compassion on the tears of a strange infant, Exod. ii. 6, how much more shall God, who is the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, 2 Cor. i. 3, have compassion on children whom he hath redeemed with the precious blood of his only Son? If he hears the young ravens when they cry, Psal. cxlvii. 9, how much more will he hear the prayers, sighs and tears, of the children of them that fear him? If he clothes the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe your children, O ye of little faith? Matt. vi. 30. Behold the fowls of the air, your heavenly Father feedeth them: Are not your children much better than they? ver. 26. In short, if God had compassion on Ishmael, Gen. xxi. 17; and on the children of Nineveh, Jonah iv. 11; how much more will he have respect unto children that have been sanctified to him from their mother's womb?

When our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was upon earth, he took in his arms little children that were brought unto him, laid his hands upon them, and recommended them to God his Father, Matt. xix. 14, 15. Now his love and tender compassion for them are not lessened, but rather increased with his glory. Therefore, if we offer him our children with all our hearts, he will take them into his protection, and lay upon them the hands of his grace, which he will never take from them. In short, he that hath promised them the kingdom of heaven, and his eternal felicities, will not withhold from them the necessaries of this present life.

We can do nothing without God; but he can do all things without us. A great many children, who are brought up at home, under the eye of their parents, grow debauched, and are ruined; whereas many, that are forced out while young, or left orphans, become shining patterns of piety and goodness. For example, in Isaac's house, in the presence of this holy person, Esau became profane, and a glutton, Gen. xxv.; whereas Jacob, who was sent to a great distance, in all his flights and wanderings, had always before his eyes the fear of his father Isaac, Gen. xxxi.; that is, the God whom his father feared. In Jacob's house, Reuben defiled his father's bed, Gen. xxxv. 22; whereas Joseph, who was sold into Egypt to Potiphar, chose rather to expose himself to a cruel

punishment, and even to death, than to touch his master's wife, Gen. xxxix. David had the unhappiness to see some of his children guilty of murder and incest; whereas Joash and Josiah, who were left orphans in their infancy, became wise and virtuous princes, burning with zeal for the service of God. How many children are there, who, notwithstanding all the care and pains of their fathers, fall into extreme misery? How many are dragged from their parents' embraces to an ignominious death? Whereas others, who are left without parents, friends, or any human assistance, not only escape the greatest dangers, but rise to the highest honours and dignities; as Joseph in Egypt, and Daniel in Babylon. Likewise Esther, a poor captive orphan, became a queen, and God made use of her and her credit to deliver his people from Haman's conspiracy, Esth. vii. We see every day orphans blessed by God in an extraordinary manner. Cast your eyes upon the children of the blessed martyrs, and you shall find many whom God hath made noble instances of his special favour, and that mercy which he hath promised to show unto thousands of them that love him, and keep his commandments. Thou shalt meet with many that are a thousand times more prosperous than the children of persecutors. Nay, thou shalt behold them with astonishment, giving alms to the very children of them that have plundered their houses.

So long as the breath of life remains in your nostrils, exhort your children to fear God, to serve him, and to apply themselves with all their hearts to the exercise of godliness, which hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come, 1 Tim. iv. 8. Teach them to "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto them," Matt. vi. 33.

Finally, though your life should be a thousand times more useful to your children than it really is, remember what our Lord and Saviour saith, "He that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me," Matt. x. 37. Heaven is more excellent than earth. The salvation and glory of our souls are to be preferred before all the considerations of flesh and blood. It is not just, that they to whom we have given the enjoyment of a temporal life, should hinder us from the fruition of life eternal. Besides, when we recommend them to God, we put them into the protection of a friend, who is wise to know all their necessities; good to supply them with whatever is needful; and almighty to accomplish all things that may be for their advantage.

Let us therefore conclude, that it is the duty of a good father, who hath the fear of God before his eyes, not to resist death, nor to fly from it when the Lord calls; but, according to the example of the ancient patriarchs, he ought to end his days willingly, praising God, and exhorting his children to love, fear and serve him with all their hearts, to persevere in his holy covenant, and to prefer him to all the riches and honours upon earth. And as when our Saviour had blessed his disciples, a cloud received him up into heaven, Luke xxiv.; so when a good Christian shall have given his blessing to his children, he will shut his eyes to the world, and think upon nothing but the eternal and unspeakable joys of paradise.

If God calls us to himself in a time of public calamity and distress, and our beloved children, weeping about our bed, say unto us, as Isaac unto Abraham, "My father, behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Gen. xxii. 7; God causeth the instrument of his anger and just vengeance to appear on every side. Wherever we cast our eyes, we see nothing but fire and sword. The image of death, and horrid tortures, terrify and affright us; desolation stands in the holy place, the fire hath laid hold on the sanctuary, and nothing appears to deliver us; the deluge is so universal, that like Noah's dove, we can find no rest for the sole of our feet, Gen. viii. 9. All our hope is, that God will stretch out his hand, and receive us into that ark which is above the heavens, and to which your soul is now departing. If our dear children speak to us in this manner, let us put on the courage, constancy and faith of the Father of the faithful, and return them this answer, *My children, God will provide*, Gen. xxii. 8. It is he that acts beyond probability and hope; that causeth the dead to live; and calleth those things which be not, as though they were, Rom. iv. 17. He will send his good angels to administer to all your necessities. When you shall be reduced to the last extremity, ready to receive the fatal stroke of death, God will stay the sword of his justice, and will change your cries and tears into joy and everlasting gladness. There will arise some holy and devout soul, some lover of the public tranquillity, that shall bring to you the olive branch of peace. If God only breathes, the tempest will cease, the winds be still, and the overflowing waves that are ready to devour you shall return to their former channels. Otherwise he will preserve you by miracle in the midst of these terrible calamities and horrid confusions. As Abraham found a ram

caught in a thicket, Gen. xxii. 13; so in the midst of the sharpest troubles, the most intricate and dreadful difficulties, you shall find unexpected comfort and help. And as the various colours of the beautiful rainbow appear upon the cloud whence the storm and rain proceed; thus, in the greatest afflictions, God will give you precious testimonies of his fatherly care and affection. The hope which you have in God shall never make you ashamed, *because the love of God is shed abroad in your hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto you,* Rom. v. 5. The hotter the fires shall be, the more and the greater miracles they will bring forth. The higher the waters of your deluge shall rise, the nearer they will approach your souls unto God, and the nearer you will draw to heaven, the place of our eternal rest. Therefore, be comforted, my dear children, and assure yourselves, that by the favour of God's grace and mercy, we shall speedily see one another again. I shall not return to you, but you shall come to me, 2 Sam. xii. 23; for I go to that spacious and magnificent house, whither our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is gone to prepare a place for us, and where he will receive us all, John. xiv. 2, 3. I ascend *unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God,* John xx. 17.

XI.

Prayer and Meditation for a King or Prince, who prepares for death, by relying upon God's providence.

King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, who of thy special grace and favour hast ordained me, upon earth, a lively image of thine omnipotence, a ray of thy glory; suffer me not to be lifted up with pride on account of the power and majesty wherewith thou hast clothed me; and let me not imitate the vanity of that profane monarch, who cried, Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? On the contrary, grant that I may devoutly adore him by whom I reign; and that I may prostrate my heart before thy sovereign and eternal throne, at which I must appear, not only as a man, to answer for my own particular actions, but also as a prince, to render an account of my administration, and the many thousand souls which thou hast committed to my charge. If at any time the splendour

of a crown dazzles me, or my flatterers cry out, The voice of a God, and not of a man; let me remember my frail and corruptible nature, that I came into the world like other men, and am subject to the same passions and infirmities; that death will not spare me any more than the meanest of my subjects, nor pay me any greater respect; that he will enter as boldly into my palace, as into the tent of my poorest soldier, or a shepherd's cottage; that he will break my sceptre with as much ease as his sheep-hook; that he will trample under foot the precious jewels of my crown with as little ceremony as the flowers of the field; and that my life, as well as that of my vilest slave, is but a breath in my nostrils, a wind that passes away, a shadow that flies. O God of all flesh! so long as it shall please thee to continue me here below, reign in my heart and over my affections. Guide me by thy holy spirit, and direct me by thine infinite wisdom. Since by thee kings reign, and princes execute judgment, grant me thy grace, that I may have thee always before mine eyes, and employ to thy glory, and the advancement of thy kingdom, all the power and authority which I possess from thy bounty. Let me consider my subjects as thy creatures, made by thee in thine image, and as thy children whom thou hast redeemed with the blood of thine only Son. And whereas it hath seemed good in thine eyes to make so great a distinction between them and me, let me never forget the immense distance which there is between me, who am but dust and ashes, a worm, and less than nothing, and thee, O great and living God! whose being is eternal, and power infinite. When thou sayest to the richest and most mighty monarchs of the earth, *Sons of men return!* in an instant they return to the ground from whence they were taken; and with them vanish all their deep designs, all their great and glorious enterprizes. O Sovereign Potentate of the world! when it shall please thee to advertise me by any one of thy prophets, or otherwise to certify me by any visible token, that it is thy good pleasure to take me from my kingdom (my principality), instead of being afraid, or afflicting myself like an infidel prince, grant that I may show an heroic constancy, and a Christian resignation to thy holy and divine will. If with one hand thou writest the sentence of my death, with the other thou shalt engrave that irrevocable decree, in virtue whereof I shall go to take possession of a life sovereignly happy. O Almighty God! what are all the kingdoms from which thou takest me, in comparison of the celestial inherit-

ance which thou hast prepared for me from the foundation of the world ! Seeing, with respect to the heavens, all the earth is no more than a point ; what are all the diadems here below ? Unstable and perishing when compared to that incorruptible crown of glory which thou wilt give me at the end of my course. O that I may lay aside with joy this regal purple, to put on those precious robes of light and immortality, which shine forth in thy celestial paradise ! that I may cheerfully lay down this transitory sceptre, to take up those everlasting palms which adorn the glorious hands of thy triumphant saints ! O victorious Prince of the kings of the earth ! From thee I received the government of this my kingdom (principality), into thine adorable hands I most willingly resign it. Graciously grant that my successor may inherit the piety and zeal which thou hast kindled in my heart ; or rather, O inexhaustible source of blessings ! grant that he may surpass me in all things; that he may have none of my defects, but may be adorned and enriched with all the virtues which I want ; that he may be clothed with thy most excellent gifts, and crowned with thy most precious favours. My King and my God ! thou hast given me, as to David, the man after thine own heart, a sincere and earnest desire to rebuild thy temple, and to beautify thy church ; but since it hath not seemed good in thine eyes, that I should advance this glorious work, grant that my successor may be filled with a wisdom like unto that of Solomon ; and that he may be attended with the same prosperity, glory and happiness ; that he may establish his throne upon a solid piety ; that during his reign, righteousness and peace may kiss each other ; that truth may flourish in the earth, and charity shine forth from heaven ; that all his people may bless him ; that he may have as many guards as subjects, and as many citadels as hearts. But, above all, O merciful God! grant him grace that he may rebuild thy house, and that he may raise it to the utmost height of glory and happiness that it is capable of attaining here below. Meantime, I will go and glorify thee in the magnificent palace of immortality. I will cast my crown at the feet of the Lamb, and will worship him who liveth for ever and ever. *Amen.*

XII.

Prayer and Meditation for a Viceroy or Governor.

Adorable Governor of the universe! since I have the honour to represent my prince, who is a lively image of thy Majesty, it is but just that I pay thee a religious homage. For I should not possess this power, was it not given me from above, and if thou, who art the King of Kings, and who holdest in thine hand the hearts of princes, hadst not caused me to find favour in their sight. Grant me thy grace, that I may never forget, that the people over whom I rule are not my slaves, but the subjects of my prince ; and what is more, thy creatures and thy children : that it is not for me to dispose of them as I will, or to follow the dictates of my passions, but to observe the orders which I have received, and to obey thy divine commands : that I may represent to myself my prince as always present, and overlooking all my actions ; but especially that I may never forget that I am always before thy sacred eyes, which penetrate to the bottom of my heart, and read my most secret thoughts : that I may remember, day and night, that I must give an account to my master of the administration wherewith he hath entrusted me ; and that I must appear before thy tribunal, where all disguise and evasion are in vain. If, while I thus discharge my office with all the fidelity, diligence and vigour whereof I am capable, death shall come and call me from the world, mercifully grant that I may not be afraid ; but that I may quit these honours without regret, seeing the government of a kingdom, or an empire, or even over a thousand worlds, is nothing in comparison of that glory and exaltation which thou hast prepared for me in heaven. Let not the care of what may happen after my decease disturb the peace and repose of my soul ; for thou canst raise up ministers and governors, who shall be filled with the spirit of wisdom and prudence, and whose administration shall be attended with success and glory. Meantime, I shall rest for ever from all my fatigues and labours ; and after I shall have overcome Satan, the world, sin and death, and shall have kept thy works unto the end, thou wilt put a palm into my hand, a crown upon my head, and into my mouth the song of the blessed, in whose company I shall sing praises and thanksgiving for ever and ever. *Amen.*

XIII.

Prayer and Meditation for the General of an Army, or any other superior Officer.

O Lord of Hosts! I have always believed that this profession which I have embraced for the service of my prince and country, is not displeasing to thee. Thou hast formerly given military laws to thy people, thou hast not disdained to guide their armies, to march in their camp, and to order all their battles. Though thy Son is the King of peace, yet his first minister commands not soldiers to lay down their arms, but only to be content with their wages, and to do violence to no man; and his holy apostles teach us, that it is not to no purpose that thou hast put a sword into the hands of kings and princes, who are the images of thy Almighty power and Sovereign justice. Grant that whenever I am at the head of my army (or company), I may represent to myself my prince as there in person, and that I am to fight in his presence; but above all, let me remember that I am in the company of thy holy angels, and before thee, who art *the Prince of the kings of the earth*, of all their people and all their armies. Let not the power which is given me of commanding others, cause me to neglect that obedience which I owe to thee, my Creator and my God. Let not my post as captain make me forget that I am the soldier of Jesus Christ, *who in righteousness doth judge and make war.* Let not the sword which I wear at my side, hinder me from arming my heart with the sword of the Spirit, which is thy holy word, sharper than any two edged sword, seeing it divides the soul and the spirit, the joints and the marrow. With this divine sword, give me the breast-plate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation, and above all, *the shield of faith, wherewith to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.* O my God, endue me with the strength and virtue of thy Holy Spirit, that I may be able to encounter all my spiritual enemies, and gain the victory over them. Give me to overcome the world and sin, to conquer myself, my passions and evil affections, to see hell routed, and Satan bruised under my feet. Finally, grant me the grace to encounter death courageously, and to overcome it. O great and living God, I have no need of any one to remind me of my mortality, seeing death is every day present before mine eyes, and that I march con-

tinually in the midst of its envenomed darts. If it should attack me in the beginning of my success, in the first dawn of my glory, grant that I may fix my hopes upon a more glorious victory, a more magnificent triumph, than any this world can boast, since to vanquish millions of men, and to triumph over the whole earth, is nothing in comparison of our conquest over death, and our triumph over hell. Or, if this inexorable death shall take me away at a time when my life and services seem the most useful to my prince and country, teach me to put my trust in thine adorable providence, which never wants either captains or soldiers. Thou shalt raise up more virtuous and triumphant leaders; meantime, I shall enter into that celestial peace which reigns in thy kingdom. O Lord Jesus, I shall reap the fruits of that blessed immortality which thou hast purchased for me by thine incomparable victories, thy most glorious sufferings, and shall share in the magnificence of thine eternal triumphs. Let death, therefore, come when it will, I shall be always ready to say unto it, with the apostle, *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day. Amen.*

XIV.

Prayer and Meditation for a Judge or Magistrate.

Sovereign Judge of the world, who hast honoured me with this high office, and hast entrusted in my hands the administration of justice, grant that I may never forget that I am called thereto, not by men, but by thee, who bringest low, and liftest up, and who raisest up the poor out of the dust, to set them among princes. Enlighten me with thy divine light, and endue me with that spirit of wisdom which thou formerly madest to rest upon thy servant Moses, and the judges of Israel. Grant me thy grace that I may worthily support the dignity of mine office, and show myself impenetrable to corruption. Let mine ears be always open to the cry of the afflicted; but let them be forever shut against injustice, and the criminal voice of favour and affection. Let me have no respect to persons, but do impartial justice to every one, and let nothing deter me from condemning the guilty, and clearing the innocent. Let me never be swayed

either by my own passions or those of others ; but grant that I may be a faithful interpreter of thy laws and ordinances. Every time I sit to judge thy people, let me remember that thou presidest in the assembly of the judges, and that thou seest the very bottom of their hearts. Let me never forget, that after having judged others, I shall be judged myself, and that nothing can withstand the decrees of thine adorable counsel. If at any time the considerations of flesh and blood have the power to tempt me, let me remember my latter end, that I may be restrained by a holy dread. Let me represent it to myself, as bringing me a summons to appear in person before thy tribunal, where I must give an account, not only of my words and actions, but also of my most secret thoughts, and every wilful error of opinion. O Lord, thou hast eyes which penetrate the deepest abyss, an ear which hears the silent voice of the heart, and a hand which arrests the criminal wherever he goes. When I think of that glorious throne, round which the ministers of thy justice fly by thousands, I should tremble with fear, if he that sits thereon was not mine advocate as well as judge ; if he had not paid my ransom, and was not ascended up into heaven, to make intercession, and prepare a place for me. Grant therefore, that I may part without reluctance from the vain and transitory honours of this world, seeing thou preparest for me on high a more excellent dignity, which is eternal and unchangeable. Let me cheerfully put off those robes, which breed nothing but moths and cares to torment my heart, and let me put on, with transports of joy, those robes of light and glory which will render me sovereignly happy. Let me descend with pleasure from this judgment-seat, seeing the Lord Jesus hath promised, that to them that overcome, he will grant to sit with him on his throne. Thou wilt mercifully raise in my stead prudent and incorrupt judges, who shall judge the people in righteousness and truth. Meantime, I shall reap the sweet and pleasant fruits of thine eternal mercies, which thou hast manifested in thine only Son, who hath purchased for us, and is made unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. *Amen.*

XV.

Prayer and Meditation for a minister of God's word who beholds the approach of death with a holy joy.

Great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls! I can never enough acknowledge, nor sufficiently admire the graces and favours which thou hast bestowed upon me. Thou hast invested me with an office, wherewith the angels of heaven think themselves honoured, and which thou madest thy sacred employment in the days of thy flesh. It hath pleased thee to make me one of the shepherds of thy flock, and to entrust in mine hands the care of what thou holdest the most dear and precious in this world, namely, of thy church, which thou hast so loved, that thou gavest thyself for it, and hast redeemed it with thine own blood. But alas, my Lord and my God! who is sufficient for these things? The office is exceeding weighty and painful, and as for me, I am weakness and infirmity itself. The world hates and cruelly persecutes us; and the devil, like a roaring lion, walks continually round about us, seeking to devour both the shepherds and the flock. Even in thine heritage, how often do I eat the fruit of bitterness, and drink the water of affliction? I meet with brambles and thorns without number, but with few flowers. They who ought to encourage me in the midst of so many difficulties, weaken my hands, and afflict my heart; and that which should yield me the greatest joy and consolation, is become my greatest grief, and most piercing torment. O merciful Lord, so long as it shall please thee to preserve me in this mortal life, and to continue to me the honour of thy holy ministry, make thy strength perfect in my weakness, and accomplish thyself the work which thou commandest thy servant. Open the door to the gospel of thy grace, and grant that all the earth may learn to serve and worship thee in spirit and in truth. Cast down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against thee, and bring into captivity every thought to thy obedience. Let the world be confounded, with all its deceits; and let it never have the power either to terrify me by its threats, or to corrupt me by its promises. Let Satan as lightning fall from heaven, and let him be for ever shut up in the bottomless pit. Stop the mouths of all false prophets, and let truth be every where victorious and triumphant over lies. Mer-

cifully grant, that we may see thy flock increase in number; but above all things, that it may increase in grace, and thy heavenly benediction. Let me never forget, that the sheep over whom I have the honour to be shepherd, are not mine, neither any man's living, but thine, O Lord Jesus, who hast created them by thine infinite power, redeemed them by thy sovereign mercy, and offered thyself a willing sacrifice, to deliver them out of the paw of the bear, and out of the paw of the infernal lion. Let me remember that I must soon appear before thy glorious face, and render an account of my ministry. O Lord, thou knowest all things, and from whom nothing is hid, thou seest the bottom of my heart, and readest my most secret thoughts. Thou knowest with what fidelity and affection I have employed myself in thy service. I have led thy sheep to feed on the sweet herbage of thy divine pastures; and have given them to drink of the waters springing up into eternal life. My conscience beareth me witness both before thee, and in the presence of thy holy angels, that I have advanced nothing, either by word of mouth or by writing, but what I believe to be entirely conformable to the sacred oracles of thy prophets, apostles and evangelists. I have drawn from the treasure of thy Holy Scriptures, things both new and old, for the adornment of thy house, and the edification of those that dwell therein. I have laboured day and night to accomplish whatever thou hast put into my heart for thy glory, the advancement of thy kingdom, and the consolation of thy children. In the most difficult encounters, I have taken counsel neither of flesh nor of blood, but have preferred the honour of thine Almighty name, and the manifestation of thy truth, to all earthly advantages, and every particular interest of my own. I have esteemed as nothing all the riches of the world, and all the honours of the age, in comparison of this celestial treasure, this light of life, which thou hast placed in me, as in an earthen vessel, that glory may be given to thee alone, who art the author of every good and perfect work. My beloved meat, my most delicious drink, has been to do thy will, and to finish thy work. I have taken a peculiar pleasure in pronouncing the decrees of thine adorable wisdom, and in revealing the mysteries of thy kingdom. I have sympathized in all evils and misfortunes of thy members, and I have not been sparing to them of those consolations wherewith thou hast comforted me in all my afflictions, and wherewith thou hast sustained and strengthened me in all my encounters. Thy law is within my heart, and thy gospel is engraved by the finger of thy Holy Spirit.

Thou hast kindled in me a sincere desire to save souls, and to bring them to the kingdom of thy glory. O Lord, who seest all the secret corners of the heart, thou knowest whether I can say with thy prophet, *The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up;* or with thy holy apostle, that *the care of thy church cometh upon me daily*. But in all these things I pretend not to stand justified. So far from relying upon my own righteousness, and being puffed up with an opinion of my own merits, I confess myself to be a poor miserable sinner; and with all humility, beg pardon for the notorious defects wherewith I have dishonoured thy service. My charity has not been sufficiently pure, nor my zeal enough inflamed. I have sometimes been too indulgent, and at other times too severe in reprehending vice; and I have not been as I ought, a pattern to thy flock in all sorts of good works. The love of myself hath insensibly mingled itself with that love which I owe to thee alone; and I have not served thee purely for thine own sake, and because of thy divine perfections, but likewise in hopes of that reward which thou hast promised to thy faithful servants, when thou shalt give to every one his hire. I have been too sensible of the injuries offered to my person, especially when I have seen sinister interpretations put upon my best actions, and my most charitable cares repaid with ingratitude. I have not always possessed my soul in patience, nor have I been master of all that meekness, forbearance and humility, of which thou left, when here on earth, such a shining example for our imitation. O Lord, if thou shouldst deal with me according to the rigour of thy justice, and require of me those souls which have perished, either through my negligence or evil example, I should be altogether covered with shame and confusion, and should soon see myself with the wicked servant, in the furnace of fire, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. But, O all-gracious Lord! thou art goodness, mercy and charity itself. Thou acceptest the endeavour for the effect, the will for the deed, and hast always thine arms open, to receive to mercy thy poor servants who mourn for their sins, and prostrate themselves at thy feet, imploring pardon and compassion. O adorable Saviour, how rich art thou in mercy! Thou art always ready to lift up the light of thy countenance upon all those that call upon thee, and that draw near unto thee with a true and serious repentance. Even while I am pouring out my soul before thee, I know that thou hast already heard me, and that the contrition of my heart, and the voice of my mourning are acceptable unto

thee. Thou strengthenest my faith, raisest my hopes, and fillest my soul with sweet and unspeakable tokens of thy love. Thou makest me taste the salvation which I have so often pronounced to others. I feel the hand of thy grace, which draws me unto thee; and I see thee opening, to receive me, the gates of that delightful paradise, to which I have had the happiness to guide so many good and pious souls, who now rest in the bosom of thy glory; insomuch that thou givest me boldness to cry out with thy holy apostle, "I know that God will be merciful unto me, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom." O merciful and gracious Lord, I find my heart grown languid, and my strength consumed; but thou art the rock of my heart, and my portion for ever. I see death present before mine eyes; but instead of afflicting or terrifying, it comforts and rejoices me; for it comes to put an end to this miserable life, which is nothing but a state of infirmity, a kind of death. It comes to put an end to labours which have no intermission, and to free me from a chain of anguish and grief. Rejoice, therefore, my soul, and see the rest which the Lord prepares for thee. Behold the blessed time, when I shall no more be exposed to the heat of the day, nor the inclemency of the night, but shall rest for ever under the shadow of the tree of life, and satisfy myself with its precious fruits. I shall no longer bear the contradiction of sinners, nor have the enemies of thy truth, and my own lusts to encounter; but shall live for ever with thy angels, and triumph with thy saints. I shall no longer be employed in crying out against the impenitency of the world, in weeping for the sins which disfigure the face of thy church, in complaining of the injustice and cruelty of others, and in bewailing my own faults; but I shall sing for ever thy divine praises with seraphims and the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven. O Lord, in whose hands is a power infinite, and treasures inexhaustible, drive from thy sheepfold all ravening wolves and hirelings; and raise up to thy church faithful shepherds, inflamed with a purer and more fervent zeal than ours; endue them with a more rich abundance of thy graces, and crown their labours with more happy success. Meantime I shall go to serve thee in heaven, in a more excellent and glorious ministry, where I shall meet with no opposition or resistance; and where weariness and grief shall be strangers to me. I shall enter into the joy of my Lord, and receive from his merciful hand an in-

corruptible crown of glory and immortality. I shall follow the Lamb wheresoever he goes; and he himself shall be my Shepherd. He shall lead me to the fountains of living water, and shall wipe away all tears from mine eyes. *Amen.*

XVI.

Prayer and Meditation for the Father of a Family.

Father of eternity! I return thee my hearty thanks, for that thou hast been pleased to make me an instrument of bringing children into the world, out of whose mouth thou perfectest praise; who serve thee here below, and shall worship thee for ever in heaven, with ten thousands of thy angels. So long as I have been with them in this world, I have nourished and brought them up in thy love and fear. I have given them to suck from their infancy the milk of piety; and as they have become more advanced in years, I have taught them to walk in thy ways, and to obey thy holy commandments. I have endeavoured to set them a good example, and to be unto them a guide and a shining light. Now, therefore, that I am about to return unto thee, the author of my life, and only fountain of my felicity, into thy sacred hands I commit them, beseeching thee to look upon them with eyes of love. They are thine, O Lord! thine image and thy workmanship. This body, which is so wonderfully and fearfully made, was formed and fashioned by thy divine hands; and this soul, which enlightens and animates it, is the breath of thy mouth, a ray of thy glorious countenance. Thou hast promised to be our God, and the God of our seed after us. Thy great and precious promises were made to us and to our children. O heavenly Father, *I pray, not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou wouldst protect them from evil;* that thou wouldst keep them under the shadow of thy wings, and preserve them from all the miseries and calamities with which thou threatenest the earth, because of the wickedness that reigns therein: or, if thou chastenest them, let it be with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men; but let not thy mercy and thy fatherly kindness depart from them. Let the fire of affliction render their faith more pure, their life more holy, and their zeal more ardent; let it raise them up to thee, and thy eternal happiness. Almighty Fa-

ther! thou seest that the age is altogether turned aside after vanity; that all the earth hath corrupted its ways; and that vice is every where triumphant. Thou knowest that the nature of these poor children is frail, and of itself inclined to evil; mercifully grant them the necessary antidotes and preservatives against this general defection, this universal corruption. Let not the malice of the world gain upon their affections, nor Satan seduce them, nor evil communications corrupt their good manners. Give them understanding to know thee, a heart to love thee, and affections to embrace and unite themselves for ever with thee. Let thy holy angels guard them day and night, thy providence defend them, thy word instruct them, thy promises comfort them, and thy Holy Spirit regenerate them, and renew in them thine image. Give them neither poverty nor riches, but their daily and necessary bread; and above all, that bread which came down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world; and make them taste the heavenly gift, and the powers of the world to come. Warm them with thy love, inflame them with thy charity, and adorn them with all Christian virtues. But above all, sanctify them by thy Holy Spirit, and make them new creatures. Confirm them for ever in thy holy covenant, and grant that they may leave it to their posterity, as a precious inheritance; so that thou mayest be glorified in my family from generation to generation, to the end of ages. Grant that neither the world, nor hell may be able to pluck them out of thy hand; and that nothing may separate them from the love which thou hast manifested to them in Jesus Christ thy Son. Let not death affright, but rather rejoice and comfort them, seeing it is the entrance into the house of their heavenly Father, and the gate of thy paradise. Whatever changes happen to them in this life, grant that they may always keep their eyes fixed upon thee, who art *the same yesterday, to-day and for ever.* Let them never forget what they owe to thy bounty, from which they have received life and being. May they prefer the glory of thy name, the purity of thy service, and the hope of thy kingdom, to all the glory, honours, riches and pleasures of the world. O God, the Creator and Father of their souls, rather let them suffer a thousand deaths, or reduce them to their primitive nothing, than abandon them to vice, error and superstition, which give unto the creature the honour and glory that belong to the Creator. O Almighty and ever merciful God! I will not say unto thee, as Esau to Isaac, after he had blessed Jacob, *Hast thou but one bless-*

ing, my father? For I know that thou hast an ocean of them, an inexhaustible source ; but I beseech thee, with all the earnestness and zeal whereof I am capable, that thou bless my dear children with all the choicest and most excellent blessings of heaven and earth. Lead them in thy hand, bear them upon thy wings, engrave them in thy heart, and let them be as dear to thee as the apple of thine eye. Let thy fear be always before their eyes, let them love thee with all their heart, serve thee with all their might, and glorify thee both in prosperity and adversity, in life and in death ; as Jesus Christ thy Son is gain to them, whether they live, or whether they die. Meantime I will leave the world without regret, and my children without distrust in thy providence. I ascend, with a holy joy, unto thee, who art *my God and their God, my Father and their Father ;* and I trust in thy great and eternal mercies, that we shall one day see each other again in thy bosom, where we shall be admitted to the contemplation of thy face, which is fulness of joy for evermore. *Amen.*

CHAPTER XIII.

The first Consolation against the Fears of Death: God will not forsake us in our dying agonies.

Man is by nature sensible of pain, and abhors suffering. Now, most persons are persuaded, that it is impossible to die without enduring great torment ; therefore they are afraid of death, not so much for its own sake as for the evils that accompany it.

To banish out of the mind these ill-grounded fears and panic terrors, let us consider in the first place, that death is not so frightful and full of pain as is commonly imagined. The Holy Ghost calls it *a sleep*, and the Heathens themselves have styled sleep, *death's cousin-german, and the image of frozen death.* Now, sleep steals insensibly upon us ; it gently charms our senses, and, with invisible fetters, softly binds and puts a stop to our most active faculties ; so that, although we fall asleep every night, we know not how this happens to us. It is recorded of Socrates, one of the most famous of the ancient Heathens, that having drank

poison, in obedience to the decree of the Athenian judges, when he felt the venom benumbing his senses, and death creeping into his veins, he declared, with a pleased and composed countenance, *That he had never swallowed any thing more delicious in his life.* No sleep can be imagined more sweet than the death of the ancient patriarchs. The Holy Scripture tells us, *That when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost,* Gen. xlix. 33. To the same purpose, it is said of king David, that when he had exhorted his son Solomon to fear God, and to do justice, *he slept with his fathers,* 1 Kings ii. 10. God extends the same mercy to many in these latter days, who die in discoursing of him, and calling upon his holy name. Their souls are not plucked from them by violence, but bid a willing adieu to the earth, and fly into heaven with a holy cheerfulness. The separation of such souls happens without pain, grief or bitterness. They are like a taper, that, without being disturbed by any blast of wind, expires of its own accord, when the wax that kept it alive, and nourished its flame, is totally spent. If you see some racked and tortured upon their death bed with sharp and exquisite pains, these are not properly the pains of death, but the last struggles and convulsions of life; for I cannot believe, that the moment of the separation of the soul from the body we feel any pain; because at that instant the senses are lulled asleep, and our body has no more strength or vigour to oppose the soul's departure.

Death is so far from being so frightful and full of pain as we commonly imagine, that, on the contrary, it is the very thing that puts an end to all our pain, and stops the course of our miseries; and I am persuaded, that the diseases that usually bring us to our graves, are not so grievous and full of pain, as many others that we endure whilst we live; such as the gout, for example, the stone in the kidneys, or a cancer in the breast. For these are a rack on which we are hourly tortured, a wild beast that gnaws us continually, and a fire that consumes us without intermission.

But supposing that our deathbed pains should be far more sensible, and that we should have reason to charge them all upon death; yet we have no colour from thence to fly from it, or to abhor its approaches. We might with as much reason curse the hour of our birth, and weep for our victories; seeing there is no birth without pain, nor victory without contending. The fairest and most flourishing laurels are watered with blood and sweat.

The most excellent things are the most difficult in their attainment; and as one nail drives out another, to use a vulgar proverb, so one evil is commonly a remedy to many other evils. Nay, we ourselves seek, as some good thing, that evil that frees from any violent pain that we can hardly bear. To be healed of our distempers, we swallow bitter potions that offend our taste and torment our bowels; to be freed from the stone, we endure a most painful cutting; and to hinder a gangrene from spreading to our heart, we suffer with patience a leg or an arm to be cut off. Therefore, though death should be a thousand times more bitter, more painful and cruel, than it is commonly represented; yet we ought to embrace it cheerfully, because it delivers us not only from one disease or one particular pain, but in general from all our complaints. Physic is not always effectual to expel the humour that afflicts us. When one stone is extracted from the bladder, many times others grow therein that are worse. The surgeon's hand, let it be ever so skilful, answers not always to the patient's expectation; instead of removing his pain, it sometimes increaseth it. But the operation of death is certain and infallible, and the success always happy to a Christian soul.

That I may administer some comfort to thee in the midst of thy sharp pains and afflictions, my brother, or my sister, know that these things happen not to thee by accident, but they are appointed thee by God, whose dispensations are various, according to his wisdom. Ascribe not thy disease to the influence of the stars, or to blind chance; but lift up thine eyes to him who hath stretched out the heavens, and appointed the seasons, who is the author and disposer of thy life. We need not tempt God, as the Philistines of old, and require from him a miracle, to know if it is his hand that hath smote us, or whether our wounds are a chance that hath happened unto us, 1 Sam. vi. For God assures, That he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole, Job. v. 18. Affliction cometh not forth out of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground, ver. 6. Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not? Out of the mouth of the Most High proceedeth not evil and good? Lam. iii. 37, 38. Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it? Amos iii. 6; that is to say, shall there be any sickness, or affliction, which is not overruled and directed by his adorable providence?

This meditation will prevent our murmuring in the midst

of our greatest troubles and most racking pain : it will cause us to say with David, I was dumb, I opened not my mouth because thou didst it, Psal. xxxix. 9 ; or, if we open our lips, it will be to say, with a blessed servant of God ; Lord, thou troublest me ! but it is enough for me that I know it is thy hand. This physic is marvellously bitter ; but, O great physician of my soul and body! I will drink it up with joy, seeing thou hast prescribed it. Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? Job ii. 10. Shall we complain of a disease with which he visits us for a few days, instead of blessing him, and giving glory to his holy name, for the health which we have enjoyed so many years? In a word, though our soul should be afflicted even to death, and our agony should be so great that drops of blood should issue out of our body, yet must we lift up our eyes to heaven and say with our Lord and Saviour, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me ; nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done, Luke xxii. 42.

The same consideration will preserve us from falling into despair, and from fancying that we shall be swallowed up in our own sorrows. For since it is God that dispenses both evil and good, and that he is faithful and just, that is to say, a God of truth and mercy, he will not suffer us to be tempted (that is afflicted) above that we are able ; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it, 1 Cor. x. 13. He kindles not all his fury, stirs not up all his wrath, Psal. lxxviii. 38, and employs not the whole strength of his arm. But when his fury is hottest, he remembers to have pity and compassion on the afflicted, Hab. iii. 2 ; for he knoweth our frame : he remembereth that we are but dust and ashes, Psal. ciii. 41; Gen. xviii. 27. He remembereth that we are but flesh ; that is to say, weakness itself, a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again, Psal. lxxviii. 39. He proportions his chastisements, not according to our crimes, but according to our great weakness. Therefore, when God speaks of David's Son, the true and lively image of the holy seed with which he hath concluded an eternal covenant, he saith, if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men ; but my mercy shall not depart away from him, 2 Sam. vii. 14, 15. And St Paul, speaking in general of the afflictions with which God visits his children, styles them temptations common to man, 1 Cor. x. 13, to assure us that they shall never surpass the strength of our frail and feeble nature.

The wise and experienced physician prescribes neither physic nor bleeding to the patient, until he hath first examined his pulse, and learned thereby the strength of his constitution; and shall not God, who is wisdom itself, and hath made all things by weight and measure, who knows the temper of our souls, who searcheth our reins, and sees our very heart, proportion his remedies to our weakness: he that inflicted punishments upon Babylon by measure, and numbers the vials of his wrath which he pours upon the seat of the beast, how much more shall he measure the rods, and weigh the afflictions, with which he chastises his children? how much more shall he number their sighs and tears? This consideration comforted king David: *O God,* said he, *thou tellest my wanderings, put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?* Psal. lvi. 8.

Notwithstanding the flesh is of a contrary opinion, I am persuaded that our diseases ought to be looked upon as our most gentle and favourable afflictions. This was David's persuasion: for when he was offered three punishments, and bid to choose one of them, either war, famine, or the pestilence, which is the most hated and dreadful of all distempers, he chose the pestilence. The reason which he gives for this choice should be for ever engraved in the bottom of our hearts, Let us fall now, saith he to the prophet Gad, into the hand of the Lord, for his mercies are great; and let me not fall into the hand of man, 2 Sam. xxiv. 14.

The evils wherewith the Lord visits us are expressions of his love and fatherly care: for the judgment, that is, his chastisements, begin at his own house, 1 Pet. iv. 17; and, among all his servants, he chastises them most severely whom he loves the most tenderly. Therefore he tells the angel of the church of Laodicea, As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten, Rev. iii. 19. The most terrible affliction that can befall us in this world, is never to be afflicted; and the most dreadful temptation, is never to be tempted. The apostle to the Hebrews speaks most excellently upon this subject: forget not, saith he, the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons: for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if you be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons, chap. xii. 5, 6, 7, 8.

All things work together for good, to them that love God, Rom. viii. 28. The diseases of the body are the medicine of the soul. The pains which rack thy flesh are meant to instruct thy conscience. God will have thee sigh for thy sins, water thy couch with thy tears, Psal. vi. 6, and abhor the remembrance of thy past life, which hath brought all this evil upon thee. He would bring thy flesh into subjection, mortify thy lusts, and make thee partake of his holiness. If it please God in this manner to sanctify his chastisements unto thee, thou wilt one day cry out with David, It is good for me that I have been afflicted: that I might learn thy statutes. Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word, Psal. cxix. 71, 67.

Although our Lord and Saviour was the only Son, and the beloved of the father, yet learned he obedience, by the things which he suffered, Heb. v. 8. God hath predestinated thee to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren, Rom. viii. 29. He would arm thee with a holy constancy, and teach thee to possess thy soul in patience, Luke xxi. 19. Therefore he causeth thee to see with thy eyes, and feel with thy hands, that all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass, 1 Pet. i. 24. He teacheth thee to humble thyself under his mighty hand, that he may exalt thee in due time, 1 Pet. v. 6.

When God intended to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt, he caused the yoke of their bondage to become more grievous and intolerable, Exod. i. and v. For the same reason, God sends thee this cup of bitterness, because he would breed in thee a loathing of the world and all its vain delights; and that thou mayest only think upon heaven and its eternal happiness. He chastens thee, that thou mayest not be condemned with the world, 1 Cor. xi. 32. He punishes thy flesh, that thy spirit may be saved, 1 Cor. v. 5.

As gold is tried in the fire, so the Lord casts us into the flames of affliction to make trial of our faith, which is more precious than fine gold, 1 Pet. i. 7. Therefore let us glorify God, even in the midst of tribulations, Knowing that tribulations worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us, Rom. v. 3, 4, 5.

God will kindle again thy languishing zeal, renew the ardour of thy prayers, and give them wings to fly to his gracious acceptance. Tell me not that thy distemper is a heavy

burthen, that hinders thy soul from lifting itself towards heaven, and that thy grievous pains dry up the moisture of thy tongue, and cause thy lips to cleave together; for I mean not the prayers composed by art, but the holy affections, and earnest sighs and groans of a soul overwhelmed with trouble. One groan wrung from us by a sense of our misery, or a single tear that flows from a penitent heart, is far more acceptable to him than a prayer of forty hours that comes from a hypocritical mouth.

When the prophet Moses saw himself inclosed between Pharaoh's army and the Red Sea, he was so troubled and perplexed, that he could not open his mouth ; but God heard the voice of his heart, and answered his silent cry, Exod. xiv. King Hezekiah chattered like a crane or a swallow, and mourned as a dove, Isa. xxxviii. 14 ; yet God had respect to his groans and tears, and heard him in his holy sanctuary.

The sighs of Jonah in the whale's belly, ascended through the depths of the sea, and mounted up to the sacred habitation of God's glory, Jonah ii. The cries of Jesus Christ expiring upon the cross, have pierced through the bosom of the Father, and have moved the bowels of his everlasting mercies, Matt. xxvii. In short, God hath been pleased to promise concerning all his children in general, Before they call, I will answer ; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear, Isa. lxv. 24. Therefore the royal prophet says not only, That God hears the cry, but, That he hears the desire of the humble, that he prepares their heart, and saves them, Psal. x. 17, and cxlv. 19, and hence the apostle St Paul, speaking of that spirit that supports us under all our weaknesses, and teacheth us to pray, saith, That it crieth in our hearts, Abba Father ; and that it maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered, Rom. viii. 15, 26.

Take courage, my brother, or my sister, and be not dismayed. Thou seest a narrow passage, a way all beset with thorns and briars ; but it is heaven's gate, and the way that leads to paradise ; for we must of necessity pass through a vale of tears, before we can come to the city of the living God. We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God, Acts xiv. 22. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted, Matt. v. 4. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him, James i. 12.

The Lord sends thee this affliction, this severe trial, not only for thine own good, and the advancement of thy own

salvation, but also for the benefit and edification of others. With a most admirable wisdom he preserves the communion of saints, and so disposeth of every one, that we all contribute to the building of his tabernacle. To one he gives riches, that he may be bountiful in alms. To another wisdom, that he may instruct the ignorant and comfort the afflicted. Some he raises to great honours and dignities, that they may protect the innocent and deliver the oppressed: and others he visits with desperate evils, and long and grievous diseases; or else he deprives them of their most needful senses, as their eye-sight, or their hearing, that they may edify their neighbours by a holy constancy and Christian practice. The ashes of Job have more lustre and true splendour than all the gold and precious stones in the world. It is many ages since he endured great and most terrible calamities; nevertheless his patience is still proposed to us for our imitation, and to the end of the world will always instruct the church of God, James v. 11. By the severity of the evils which thou endurest, God teaches thee to put on the bowels of mercy and compassion: for as he commanded the children of Israel, that they should not oppress a stranger, because they themselves had been strangers in the land of Egypt, Exod. xxiii. 9; so he sends to thee afflictions, that thou mayest pity the afflicted, and suffer with them as members of the same body. We have an example of this in Jesus Christ our head: for though the chief end of his sufferings was to redeem us, and to reconcile us to God the Father; nevertheless the Holy Ghost assures us, That he was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin; that he might be merciful, and touched with the feeling of our infirmities, Heb. ii. 17, and iv. 15.

Finally, the affliction under which thou groanest is sent to thee, not only for thy salvation and the edification of thy neighbours, but also for the glory of the great and living God, who formed and fashioned thee. For we may say of every malady that happens to good men, as Christ said of that of Lazarus, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby, John xi. 4.

Thou mayest be severe to thyself, but thou must be charitable to others, and judge candidly of thy brother's affliction. When thou art in pain and trouble think seriously upon thy sins, and turn unto God with thy whole heart; but when thou seest others confined to a bed of languishing, conclude not from thence, with David's enemies, that it is because they have committed some enormous crime, Psal. xli.; rather

imagine, that it may be a means which God employs to declare his power, and that the faith and piety of the sick person may appear in their full lustre. This divine lesson is taught us by the Saviour of the world; for when his apostles, seeing a man which was blind from his birth, asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? our Lord answered them: Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him, John ix. 2, 3. Not that these persons were, absolutely speaking, without sin, for there is none that doeth good, no, not one, Psal. xiv. 3; but the meaning is, that they were not guilty of any notorious sin, any such horrid crime, as had drawn down the vengeance of heaven upon them. It was God's good pleasure that this poor man should be born with this natural imperfection, that he might make him an example of his mercy, and declare in him his Almighty power; and that our Saviour, by giving him his sight, might make it appear that he is the true God, which forms the eye, Psal. xciv. 9; the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, John i. 9. Likewise, when some came and told this great God and Saviour what had happened to the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices, his answer was, "Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," Luke xiii. 2, &c.

God is doubly glorified by the evils and calamities with which he visits his children. For first he justifies them before all the world, from the calumnies which are thrown upon them; and makes apparent the sincerity of their love, and their unfeigned obedience: Satan accuseth us, that we serve God merely for the advantages which we receive in this life, and because he hedges us in on every side by his providence, Job. i. For this reason, God removes from us every thing that is pleasing and delightful to the flesh; he gives us the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, Isa. xxx. 20. He causeth a full cup of bitterness to be wrung out to us, and chastens us every morning, Psal. lxxiii. 10, 14. By these grievous trials, he stops the mouth of the accuser of our brethren, *which accuseth them before God day and night*, Rev. xii. 10. He declares to all the enemies of his glory and our salvation,

that we put our whole trust in God alone, and in his unchangeable promises, and not in the outward tokens which he gives of his favours. He manifests to all the world, that the anchor of our hope is not fixed here below, but that it hath laid hold upon heaven, *whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus,* Heb. vi. 20.

As God is glorified in our afflictions, he is no less honoured by our deliverance. If the land of Judea had not abounded with such as were deaf, dumb, lame, blind, decrepit and possessed with devils; if Æneas had not been sick of a palsy, and kept his bed eight years, Acts ix. 33; if a poor woman had not been diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, Matt. ix. 20; if another had not, for eighteen years, had a spirit of infirmity, which bowed her together, Luke xiii. 11; if the sick of the palsy had not been lying in his bed for thirty-eight years, John v. 5; if the daughter of Jairus had not been dead, Matt. ix.; if the widow's son of the city of Nain had not been carried to the grave, Luke vii.: in short, if Lazarus had not lain in the grave four days, John xi. 17; the divine glory of the miracles of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ had not shone abroad, to the enlightening the whole world. Likewise, in these latter days, our desperate diseases and unexpected recoveries, when human skill avails nothing, declare to the most senseless souls, that it is God alone who maketh sore, and bindeth up, Job v. 18; who bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up, 1 Sam. ii. 6.

God's deliverances of his children are of two sorts; for he either takes away the burthen that oppresses us, or else he stretcheth forth his merciful hand and helps us to bear it; either he removes the evil from us, and pacifies our affliction, or he strengthens us with power and courage, and arms us with such a patience and generous resolution as is necessary to support it. Of this we have an illustrious example in the apostle St Paul: lest he should be exalted above measure through the abundance of his revelations, God gave him a thorn in the flesh, and permitted the messenger of Satan to buffet him, and to increase the bitterness and sharpness of his malady. For this thing, this holy man besought the Lord often that it might depart from him; nevertheless the Lord would not take away this thorn from his flesh, nor drive away this messenger of Satan that buffeted him: but he delivered him in a more glorious and illustrious manner; for he strengthened him with his Holy Spirit, enriched him with his grace, caused the power of Christ to rest upon him, and made his strength perfect in his servant's weakness; insomuch that this great apostle, ravished and

transported with joy, cries out, in the midst of his sharp affliction, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong, 2 Cor. xii. 10. I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me, Phil. iv. 13. The same also appears in the holy martyr St Stephen. His death was the most cruel and most painful that can possibly be imagined; nevertheless God gave him such powerful consolations, and filled his soul with such joy, that *his face shone as it had been the face of an angel*, Acts vi. 15. To this purpose we must likewise understand the words of the apostle to the Hebrews, where he saith, That Jesus Christ having offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, was heard, in that he feared, Heb. v. 7. For he was not exempted from afflictions and sufferings; but he endured them courageously, and was in all things more than conqueror. He drank up the very dregs of the cup of God's wrath; but by his Almighty power he overcame the strength of the poison. His heavenly Father took him not down from the cross; but he hath erected upon it his glorious trophies; and that cross hath been as his triumphant chariot. Therefore, when you see a Christian bear up in the midst of a painful visitation, and overcome it by a religious constancy, who instead of mourning, rejoiceth, and comforts himself in his agonies, you may assuredly conclude, that such a one is strengthened from above, that the Spirit of God upholds him, and that his strength is made perfect in his servant's weakness. This is the most miraculous and most excellent of all deliverances.

Some, I know, approve of such discourses very well in their ordinary afflictions, and receive these consolations with a great deal of composure; but as soon as any extraordinary and violent evils seize upon them, they lose all patience; they murmur against God, and complain that he chastises them with too much rigour. Nay, some proceed so far as to curse, with Job, the day of their birth, Job iii.; and, giving a loose to despair, to cry out with Cain, My punishment is greater than I can bear, Gen. iv. 13. Miserable man! wilt thou imitate those barbarians, who curse the sun when it scorches them, and shoot their arrows against heaven when it thunders? Unhappy wretch! What will it avail thee to defy thy Creator? What advantage wilt thou reap from the blasphemies which thou belchest forth against the Sun of Righteousness? Miserable worm of the earth, less than the dust,

contemptible as nothing! Wilt thou undertake to fight against God, to pluck him from his throne, and to break the invincible arm of his power? Dost thou imagine, by offending and outraging thy judge, to stop the hand of his vengeance! Wilt thou quench the fire of his wrath by spitting in his face? Believest thou, that he will stretch forth his hand to deliver thee, that he will open it to increase thy blessings, whilst thy mouth is filled with blasphemies against him, who is thy Sovereign Lord?

Lend an ear to my advice, I beseech thee, my friend, and I will help thee out of this labyrinth, wherein thou art unhappily bewildered; and, with God's assistance, will cause thee to understand, that thou complainest wrongfully against him, who does all things by weight and measure.

1. Revolve in thy mind the whole course of thy life, and consider seriously how many wicked actions thou hast committed, either through inadvertency, or on set purpose, how many words have escaped thy mouth, and how many thoughts have been fostered in thy heart against the commands of Almighty God. Consider, with attention, the number and heinousness of thy sins, and thou shalt find that God's punishments are gentle and mild, when compared with thy offences; and that for one wound or bitter pang which thou feelest, thou hast deserved millions; insomuch that thou wilt confess with the prophet Daniel, O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of face, Dan. ix. 7; and will cry out with David; Innumerable evils have compassed me about, mine iniquities have taken hold upon me; they are more than the hairs of mine head, Psal. xl. 12. There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my sin, Psal. xxxviii. 3.

2. Consider how many persons there are in the world, better perhaps, and more pious than thee, who yet suffer sharper and longer evils, and have less comfort and assistance. If thou comparest thy condition with theirs, thou wilt find that God is partial to thee, and that he treats thee with great lenity.

3. Cast thine eyes upon the death of thy Lord and Saviour, who being just and innocent, suffered for us unjust and abominable sinners, 1 Pet. iii. 18. Thy pangs are grievous, I confess; but those which thy merciful Redeemer endured for thee were a thousand times more intolerable; witness his cries, his tears, and the drops of blood which issued from his sacred body, Luke xxii.; witness that earnest

prayer which he repeated thrice upon his bended knees, *O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me,* Matt. xxvi. 39 ; and witness that lamentable voice upon the cross, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Matt. xxvii. 46.

4. Weigh in the equal balance of the sanctuary all the evils which thou hast endured in this life, with the pains of hell which thou hast justly merited; thou wilt quickly conclude, that all thy sufferings are nothing in comparison to the horrible torments of that lake of fire, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. If thou art so sensible of the transitory pains of this life, consider how much thou art obliged to the goodness of God, who hath graciously pardoned all thine offences, and redeemed thee from the everlasting horrors of the life to come.

5. Thou must imitate those who, having their sight dazzled with looking too intensely upon extraordinary glaring colours, turn off their eyes to a less offensive object. Instead of always handling thy wounds, and continually meditating upon the evils that afflict thee ; revolve in thy mind the goodness of God, and all the favours he has vouchsafed to show thee, from the time of thy conception until now. I give thee leave to put in one side of the balance, all thy crosses, misfortunes, diseases, pains and sorrows, upon condition that, in the other side, thou wilt cast all the mercies, favours, blessings and deliverances, which thou hast received from heaven. Thou bewailest thy misery, and complainest of thy condition. Thou believest that thy languishing life is the most miserable upon the earth ; insomuch that thou canst willingly cry out, with the prophet Jeremiah, Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see, if there be any sorrow, like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me, in the day of his fierce anger, Lam. i. 12. But though there should be nothing else but only this, that God hath honoured thee with the knowledge of his sacred will; enriched thee with the graces of his Holy Spirit, and sown in thy heart the seeds of eternal life, and the blessed hopes of seeing his face in glory, thou oughtest to look upon thyself as one of the happiest creatures under the sun.

Lastly, thou must meditate, with a religious seriousness, upon the joys and eternal happiness of paradise. For I reckon with the apostle, *That the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us,* Rom. viii. 18. When we cast our

eyes upon the earth alone, we judge it to be of an unmeasurable extent. Our sight is lost and bewildered in the contemplation of so many cities, provinces and kingdoms; but when we compare it with the vast dimensions of heaven, we find it to be but a point. So when we reckon up the hours, days, weeks, months and years of our sufferings, the time appears very long; but when we compare all these portions of time with eternity, they seem but a moment. Though we should have been plunged in the very abyss of misery and misfortune, from the very first moment of our entrance into the world, until the last of our going out; nevertheless we should have sufficient reason to say, with St Paul, Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.

The only source of all our consolation is God's gracious promise to help us in time of need. Engrave in the bottom of your hearts these divine sayings, When he that hath set his love upon me shall call upon me, I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him, Psal. xci. 15. The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, 2 Pet. ii. 9. He is rich unto all that call upon him, Rom. x. 12. He is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth, Psal. cxlv. 18. He fulfils the desires of the humble, he hears their cry, ver. 19. Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all, Psal. xxxiv. 19. Call upon me, saith he, in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me, Psal. l. 15.

When a poor subject is visited and caressed by his prince in the time of his sickness, he looks upon it as a great favour, and a singular happiness. And when, in the midst of our most grievous agonies, we happen to cast our eye upon a dear friend, whom we earnestly wished to see, we are wont to say, *Methinks I feel no pain, now I have the satisfaction of your company.* Now the tenderness of God's love accompanies the glory of his Majesty. He is the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, *who comforteth us in all our tribulation*, 2 Cor. i. 3, 4. He is that bosom friend who loveth at all times, as it were, a brother who is born for adversity, Prov. xvii. 17. He is at once the King of Kings, and our most cordial friend. He enters into the house of mourning, Eccl. vii., and is nigh unto every broken heart

and contrite spirit, Psal. xxxiv. 18. The lower our estate is, the more he remembereth us, Psal. cxxxvi. 23.

Notwithstanding the misbehaviour of our children, we cannot bear to see them in distress, but are moved with compassion, and strive to comfort them to the best of our ability; and shall thy God, who loves thee more cordially, and with a more unalterable love than the best of fathers, or the most tender-hearted mother, forsake thee in the day of affliction? This merciful and compassionate Father, who took thee into his protection when thou camest into the world, who hath been thy God from thy mother's belly, Psal. xxii. 10, and hath administered to all thy necessities; shall he refuse thee his gracious succour in this thy utmost extremity? He who perfected praise out of thy mouth when thou didst suck at thy mother's breast, Psal. viii. 2; Matt. xxi. 16, who hath crowned thy youthful days with his divine blessings, will not cast thee off in the time of old age. He will not forsake thee in the last moments of thy life, when thy vigour is consumed, and thy strength faileth, Psal. lxxi. 9.

When we go about to assist our sick or wounded friends, we labour, by all possible means, to lessen their pain. We exert all our skill and discover our most excellent secrets; at least we endeavour to make them sensible by our officious cares, our sighs and tears, that we have a quick feeling of their anguish. Their cries and groans are so many darts or daggers that stab us to the heart. Likewise our merciful God is moved with compassion at our sufferings; when he sees us racked with cruel pains, his bowels yearn, his heart is turned within him, his repentings are kindled, Hosea, xi. 8, and his love towards us is inflamed afresh. In all our afflictions he is afflicted, Isa. lxiii. 9; and he that toucheth us, toucheth the apple of his eye, Zech. ii. 8. He weeps and groans for our torments, and is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, Heb. iv. 15. He binds up our bruises, and pours his balm into our wounds, Jer. xxx. He healeth the broken heart, Psal. cxlvii. 3, and causeth the broken bones to rejoice, Psal. li. 8. He pours his good ointment upon our couch, and comforts us with his sweet savour, Cant. i. If a pestilential fever hath seized upon you, this heavenly physician can give you some cordial waters, some powerful antidote to keep the poison from the heart. The hand of his grace is a sovereign remedy to preserve thy soul from the venom of the old serpent. He will apply to thy head, thy stomach, or rather to thy heart, not a dead bleeding pigeon, but the living and quickening virtue of his Holy Spirit.

Only discover to him the afflicted and diseased part, and he will anoint it with the oil of joy and gladness, that shall penetrate into thy joints and thy very marrow. If thou feelest thyself weak or fainting, thou needest only say to him, as the spouse in the Canticles, *Stay me with flagons*, chap. ii. 5, and he will not fail to present unto thee the new wine of his kingdom. If thou art thirsty, ask of him drink, and he will give thee of that water, whereof whosoever drinketh, shall never thirst, John iv. 14.

Therefore my brother, or my sister, cast thyself upon God, for his power is equal to his love, and he knows better than thyself, or we can, what is proper and expedient for thee. In his due time he will cause thy pains to cease, and will take his thorn from thy flesh. Either he will drive from thee the spirit of infirmity that afflicts thee, or else he will make his strength perfect in thy weakness. He will endue thee with so much patience, arm thee with such constancy, and fill thee with such extraordinary joy and consolation, that every one shall visibly perceive that God himself is thy helper, and that his strength sustains thee. O how sweet and pleasant is God's assistance to a Christian soul! It brings with it such vast and precious delights; it causeth such undeniable testimonies of our adoption to shine forth; it gives us such a transporting earnest of our celestial inheritance, such a ravishing foretaste of paradise, that St Paul prefers it not only to all the riches, pleasures and honours of the world, but also to his being caught up to the third heaven, where he heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter, 2 Cor. xii. 4.

If the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ, 2 Cor. i. 5. For as God commands wine to be given to him that is of a heavy heart, that he may drink and remember his misery no more, Prov. xxxi. 6, 7; so he administers the most cordial and powerful consolations to the greatest evils. It is on this occasion that he displays his Almighty arm, and pours out the rich abundance of his graces. When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee, Isa. xliii. 2. For as the Son of God was in the fiery furnace, with Daniel's three companions in Babylon, Dan. iii. 25, so in the most burning fever, the most scorching pains, he will refresh thy soul, and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not, Isa. lviii. 11. Whatever flood beats against thee, whatever defluction endeavours to choke thee, thou mayest

say with the royal prophet, I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved, Psal. xvi. 8. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death; though I have no help nor assistance in the world, and though there remains no more strength or vigour in my body, I will fear no evil, for thou, O God, art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me, Psal. xxiii. 4.

God will not only draw near to thy sick bed, but he will embrace thy person. He will kiss thee with the kisses of his mouth, Cant. i. 2; and thou shalt suck and be satisfied with the breasts of his consolations, Isa. lxvi. 11. As one whom his mother comforteth, so shall he comfort thee, Isa. lxvi. 13, and will caress thee with such tenderness, that thou mayest say with the spouse in the Cant., His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me, chap. ii. 6; with his gracious hand he will wipe away thy cold sweats; he will receive thy sighs into his bosom, and will put thy tears into his bottle, Psal. lvi. 8; and as when the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was in his grievous agony, and drops of blood fell from his sacred body, there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him, Luke xxii. 43; so in thy greatest and most difficult encounters, and when thou shalt be struggling with death itself, his faithful ministers and ambassadors, those angels of his right hand, shall visit thee, to supply thee with spiritual comforts; and if these shall be wanting, he shall send unto thee some of those spirits of light that wait before his glorious throne. O gracious God, if we could but perceive the things that are of themselves invisible; and if thou wouldst but give us eyes, like to those of thy holy prophet, 2 Kings vi., we should see legions of these heavenly spirits, flying about in the houses of mourning, to assist and comfort the faithful soul.

Finally, as the sun by its light, and the strength of its beams, drives away the thickest clouds, and cheers with the brightness of its countenance, the whole face of nature; so Jesus Christ, the true Sun of Righteousness, with healing in his wings, Malachi iv. 2, chases away our most cloudy sorrow. By the light of his grace, and the influence of his Holy Spirit, he dispels our most sensible griefs, and fills us with a joy unspeakable, and full of glory, 1 Pet. i. 8, and with the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, Phil. iv. 7.

XVII.

Prayer and Meditation for a sick Person who prepares for Death.

O Almighty and merciful God! who formest the light, and createst darkness, and dealest out good and evil according to thy wise providence, I acknowledge that it is thy hand which confines me to this bed of infirmity, and that it is rather the corruption of my manners, than any distempered habit of body, which hath brought this sickness upon me. Instead of complaining of thy justice, I adore thy goodness, and thy wonderful wisdom, which shines forth in all things. O Lord, how mild are thy chastisements compared to my offences! How wretchedly have I abused thy favours, and what a miserable use have I made of that health which I received from thee, in whom we live, move and have our being. I have had more love and affection for the things of this world, and for the satisfaction of this miserable flesh, than for the glory of thy holy name, and the salvation of my soul. Therefore all the night make I my bed to swim, I water my couch with my tears. O God, from whom nothing is hid, thou knowest that these are not the tears of anguish or indignation, but those of a sincere repentance, for having offended so good a Father, so merciful a Lord. Even in this my chastisement I feel the effects of thy compassion, and discover the bowels of thine adorable love. Thou rebukest me not in thine anger, neither correctest me in thy fury. Thou punisheth me not as a judge, but as a father; and even this chastening is a token of thy love, and of thy fatherly care: for whom thou lovest thou chasteneth, and scourgest every son whom thou receivest. So that if we be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are we bastards and not sons. Though this chastening for the present seemeth exceeding painful and grievous, nevertheless it shall one day yield me the peaceable fruits of righteousness. And as honey was at the end of Jonathan's rod, which strengthened him, and enlightened his eyes; so after having felt thy rod, I shall taste the sweet comforts and unspeakable joys of thy Holy Spirit, and my understanding shall be altogether enlightened. O Almighty and All-wise God! who bringest light out of darkness, and makest all things work together for good to them that love thee, order this sickness as it pleaseth thee, provided it be for thy glory and my sal-

vation. Thou seest my affliction and my low estate, and knowest better what is good for me than I myself. O Almighty God! I know that thou canst do all things; thou makest sore, and bindest up: thou woundest, and thy hands make whole: thou bringest down to the grave and bringest up. Thou healest at thy pleasure the most desperate distempers; thou quickenest the dead, and callest those things which be not as though they were. O incomparable Physician! thou canst not only send down thy blessing upon the medicine administered to us, but if thou sayest the word, I shall be perfectly healed. If, for reasons best known unto thee, it is thy pleasure that this my sickness continue; take not from me, O Lord, thy fatherly care, but redouble the comforts of thy Spirit. Arm me with a truly Christian spirit, and endue me with a constancy worthy the profession of thy holy name. Thou art the great physician of both soul and body. I beseech thee, O my God! if it is not thy pleasure to take this thorn from my flesh, to free me from this infirmity that afflicts my body, at least pluck from my heart all the cares and fears that gnaw and consume it. Fill my soul with thy peace, joy, love and celestial consolations. While my body stoops to the earth, and I am deprived of the society of men, let my heart mount up to the highest heaven, and let it be my whole delight to converse with thee. I have spent but too much time upon worldly affairs, which are nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit. Grant me the grace to employ this respite which thou givest me, in thinking upon my sins, to implore thy pardon with a sincere repentance; upon thy great and eternal mercies, to embrace them with a true and lively faith; and upon thy glorious kingdom, to aspire after it with a holy earnestness and Christian joy; so that I may be able to say with the man after thine own heart, My soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth praiseth thee with joyful lips: when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches. My sickness seems of a long and tedious continuance; but alas, O Lord! my sins have been of a much longer; and all the pain and evil under which I groan, are nothing in comparison of the joy and happiness which I hope for in heaven. Though all my life were one continual sickness, yet it is but a moment in respect of eternity; and this light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us an exceeding and eternal weight of glory, far more excellent than all things. O Lord, grant that the sickness and pain which afflict this body, may serve as physic for my soul, and as a spur to excite me to piety, and all Christian

virtues. Let them teach me to renounce the world, and my lusts, and to resign myself entirely to thy holy and divine will. As Jesus Christ is gain to me, whether I live or whether I die, grant that I may be equally disposed to glorify thee, either by life or by death. If it is thy good pleasure that I recover, let it be to lead a better and more godly life, in the fear of thy name, and obedience to thy divine commands. And as the wife's mother of thy holy apostle, being healed of the fever, arose and administered to the Lord Jesus; so, if thou deliverest me from my infirmity, and raisest me from this bed of sickness, let it be to glorify thee, and to serve thee to the last moment of my life. But if it pleaseth thee to remove me from the world, behold, I am ready, O God, to do thy will, and to obey thee without resistance. My soul is already loosed from this languishing body, and altogether disposed to follow thee. It grieves me not to see this poor body, feeble and emaciate, like a worn out garment, because thou preparest for it a robe of an immortal beauty. It sees without concern, this earthly tenement fall to ruin, because it hath a house in heaven, whose builder and founder thou art. I have a long time looked upon this bed as an image of the grave, in which my body must shortly be laid; and upon death, as some friendly hand, which breaks asunder the last link of this chain of misery. It will put an end to my pain, and chase away all my cares; and will bring me out of this wretched tabernacle which falls into rottenness, into the glorious palace of immortality, where thou dwellest, and where I shall glorify thee for ever, with millions of angels and blessed saints. *Amen.*

XVIII.

Prayer and Meditation for a Sick Person who labours under violent Pains.

O Father of mercies, and God of all comfort, have compassion on me! Thou seest me labour under the most exquisite pains, which consume my strength, and bruise my bones. Thy arrows pierce me on every side, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit. Thou rendest me in thy fury, and thy terrors set themselves in array against me. Deep calleth unto deep, at the noise of thy water-spouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me. Thou hast given me my days of affliction and anguish, and nights of

torture and groaning. I am as a man upon a rack, or in a fiery furnace. I feel a fire that devours, a worm that gnaws, and arrows which pierce me to the heart. O how horrid and abominable must my sins appear, seeing thou chastisest me with so much rigour! For thou art mercy itself, and it is not willingly that thou afflictest the children of men. O good God! what am I in respect of thee? Wilt thou employ the strength of thine invincible arm against a leaf driven to and fro? And wilt thou pursue the dry stubble to everlasting burnings? Wilt thou empty thy quiver upon a miserable worm of the earth? and wilt thou launch all thy thunders against a grain of dust? O Almighty God, I am not an object worthy of thine anger, that the fierceness of thy fury should burn for ever against me! Remember that I am but flesh, a wind that passeth away and cometh not again; or rather, O Lord, remember that I am thy child, and that thou hast redeemed me with the blood of thine only Son. O my God! it is not possible for me to forbear my complaints, to stifle my groans, and to stop the torrent of my tears. My soul is weary of this languishing life, or rather of this cruel death; for is there any pain like to my pain? or any anguish like to my anguish? If the prophet Jonah, for only the withering of the gourd under which he sat, and the beating of the sun upon his head, could cry out, *It is better for me to die than to live;* how much more cause have I to use that language, whose moisture is turned into the drought of summer, and who feels a fire in my bones, and a burning within my bowels, which consumes me day and night. Thine Almighty and merciful arm, which delivered me out of hell, can not it draw me out of this pit? Thou deliveredst thy children out of the fiery furnace, canst thou not quench the fury of this fire that devours me? O Lord! keep the door of my lips, that I may utter nothing contrary to the respect due to thy divine Majesty. To thee, O Almighty God! belongeth righteousness, but to me shame and confusion of face. Were the evils wherewith thou chastiseth me ten thousand times more grievous; was it possible this miserable nature could bear them; or even wert thou to cast me headlong, without pity, into the lake of fire and brimstone, which burneth for ever, I should have no cause to complain of thy severity. My afflictions are great, but they are nothing in comparison to my sins and iniquities. My pains are violent, but what are they when compared to the bitter agony of my blessed Saviour? Or what are my cold sweats compared to the drops of blood

which fell from his sacred body? My torment is cruel, but it is nothing when weighed with the glory which shall be revealed in all those who worship thee, and continue in thy obedience until the end. Shouldst thou kill me, O Lord, yet will I hope in thee; for thou afflictest me, to the end I may not perish with the world; and thou wilt that my flesh be destroyed, that my soul may be saved. Bruise me, O Lord, and tread me under thy feet, provided I may become wheat for thy garner, and new wine for thy kingdom. Tear me in pieces, or burn me in this temporal life, provided thou wilt be favourable to me in the life everlasting. Let this cup pass from me, that I may drink no more of its unspeakable bitterness; nevertheless, O heavenly Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt. Take this thorn from my flesh; or rather give me grace to bear its inexpressible anguish. O God of mercies! thou seest that my spirit indeed is willing, but my flesh is weak, and my afflictions are heavier than the sand of the sea; but thou quickenest the dead, thou makest thy strength perfect in my greatest weakness. Therefore, instead of crying out with Cain in despair, My punishment is greater than I can bear, I will say with thy holy Apostle, I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. O Lord! rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure: Correct me, but with judgment, lest thou bring me to nothing. When thou didst wrestle with Jacob, thou enduedst thy servant with the strength of thy spirit. O God! who art merciful and just, proportion thy chastisements to my great weakness. Let no temptation take me, but such as is common to man; and with the temptation also make a way to escape, that I may be able to bear it. Let neither death, nor life, nor anguish, nor torment, separate me from thy love, or pluck me out of thy hand. O Lord, abandon me not, that I may never depart from thee; but grant me a spirit of fortitude, patience and constancy; and make me in all things more than conqueror, through thy Son Jesus Christ. Gracious God! have compassion on thy servant, or rather thy child. Awake thy zeal, and the sounding of thy bowels which are restrained towards me. To strengthen me in this conflict, send me those good angels which comforted thy dear Son on the night of his bitter agony. Put an end to this night of my affliction; or rather, in the midst of this darkness, grant me to see the sweet and ravishing dawnings of thy grace. Heal my grievous wounds, or pour into them the pleasant and effectual balm of thy comfort. My flesh and my heart

fail; but do thou look upon me with an eye of love, and take me to the arms of thine eternal mercy. Show, that in all my afflictions, thou art afflicted, and that thou sympathizest in my pain. Take my sweat and my tears, and put them into thy bottles. O good God! thou seest that my strength is consumed, and that my spirit faints. Spare not thy cordial and most precious remedies. Give me the wine of thy most powerful consolations to revive my heart: let the hand of thy grace be as a sovereign application to fortify it, and drive thence the venom. And let thy Holy Spirit, the true Dove, rest upon my head, and rejoice my soul. O living God! thou seest that I am ready to expire: O give me of that living water, of which whosoever drinketh hath eternal life. My friends bear a part in my sufferings, and weep over my miseries, without being able to help me: but thy presence is help and salvation. O my God! either deliver me from this sea of affliction in which I am plunged, or guide me through the depths thereof, to that inheritance which thou hast prepared for me from the foundation of the world. Quench these raging fires which burn and consume me; or grant that they may lift me up into heaven and serve for my triumphant chariot. O Lord! I should be without understanding, and exceeding cruel to myself, should I be afraid of death; since it will put an end to my torment, break the last link of this chain of misery, wipe all tears from mine eyes, and drive away all the cares and fears that gnaw my heart. O my God! when shall my cries, my groans, and my sighs, be changed into songs of praise and triumph! When shall I see myself in the glorious company of the blessed, which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Draw me, I will run after thee, and will serve thee day and night in thy temple. *Amen.*

CHAPTER XIV.

The second Consolation against the Fears of Death is, to look upon God as a merciful Father, and to rely upon his infinite goodness.

THERE is no child of an ingenious nature, but earnestly desires to see his Father's face, and especially the face of

a good and kind father. A great prince's son, who hath been brought up in a strange, barbarous country, rejoiceth when his father sends for him to be near his person, and to partake of the glory and dignity of his empire. Far from being troubled, or seeking any pretence to delay his departure, he embraceth, with transports of joy, the messenger of such glad tidings. He thinks of nothing but hastening his journey; and if he could borrow wings, he would fly with an unspeakable swiftness to his father's palace.

Now we are the children of the living God, whose throne is heaven, and the earth his footstool, Isa. lxvi. 1. For our faith, that embraces Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Redeemer, considers God as our God and Father. For to as many as received this well-beloved of the Father, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on his name, John i. 12. So that we have just cause to be ravished with a holy admiration, and to cry out with the apostle St John, Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God, 1 John iii. 1.

We were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God who is rich in mercy, Eph. ii. 3, 4, hath predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, Eph. i. 5; and he graciously gives us infallible assurance of this free adoption: for because we are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying Abba, Father, Gal. iv. 6. This spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together, Rom. viii. 16, 17.

God hath not only adopted us by Jesus Christ to himself, but that we may be truly his children, he hath regenerated us by an incorruptible seed, 1 Pet. i. 23. We are not born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God, John i. 13. His infinite goodness moved him at first to create us, and his incomprehensible love hath inclined him to reform our beings, and to re-engrave in our hearts his divine image. Of his own will begat he us, with the word of Truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures, James i. 18. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again into a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an

inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us, 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.

Now although we are the children of God, and the presumptive heirs of his crown, yet our glory and dignity are not conspicuous during the years of our earthly pilgrimage. Our heavenly Father suffers us to live here in a contemptible and despised estate, that we may be exercised in humility, and sigh the more earnestly after celestial inheritance. As in the obscurity of a very dark night, men tread under foot pearls, diamonds, sceptres and crowns, as well as dirt, dust and ashes, so during the gross ignorance that reigns in the world, the children of God, the most precious jewels of his crown, are esteemed no better than the filth and scum of the earth. This consideration causeth St John to say, Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is, 1 John iii. 2. As David sent and brought Absalom out of the land of the Philistines, and gave him leave to dwell in the land of Jerusalem, but for the space of two years would not suffer him to enter his royal palace, or to see his face, 2 Sam. xiv.; thus God hath brought us from under the power of Satan and the tyranny of hell; he hath received us into his church, which is, as it were, a holy Jerusalem, where he gives us a foretaste of our peace and reconciliation; but he defers, for a time, our reception into the magnificent palace of his glory, and our admission to his divine providence, where there is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore, Psal. xvi. 11. Whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord, 2 Cor. v. 6; and it is only by hope that we are saved, Rom. viii. 24. But when we are absent from the body, we shall be present with the Lord, and shall enter into the actual fruition of his inheritance. In a word, while we dwell here below, we see the image of our heavenly Father, and behold his glory as in a glass, 2 Cor. iii. 18. But when he shall admit us to approach his throne, we shall see him face to face, 1 Cor. xiii. 12, shall be changed into his image, 2 Cor. iii. 18, and satisfied with his likeness, Psal. xvii. 15.

Let death be ever so frightful and ill-favoured, it is the messenger of our heavenly Father; and if we have but the courage to wrench open its fingers, and to look into its iron hand, we shall there find letters full of love, by which this Father of mercies calls us to the participation of his eternal happiness. Death not only invites us to God, but it is as it were,

a ship, by which we pass this tempestuous sea of the world, to go to our Redeemer, who expects us at the desired haven. It is like Elijah's chariot of fire, that carried him up to heaven, 2 Kings ii. 11. If death covers our eyes with one hand, and deprives us of the light of the sun with the other, it rends in pieces the veil that hinders us from seeing the rich beauties of the heavenly sanctuary, and discovers to us the glorious face of the Father of lights. If with one hand it digs a grave for our bodies, with the other it flings open for our souls the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem, and ushers them into the marriage-chamber.

Therefore, death should be so far from frightening us, that we should rather be glad of its arrival, and resolve to follow it with a holy cheerfulness. We should not only go to God with transports of joy, when he is pleased to call us to behold his face, and to eat the bread of his kingdom, Luke xiv. 15; but we should long with impatience for his glorious presence, and sigh after that blessed day, when he shall put us into his bosom, and satisfy us with his delights. A true believer will break out, on this occasion, into David's holy rapture, As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? Psal. xlii. 1, 2.

I know that this great God, before whom we are to appear, is clothed with glory and majesty, and dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto, 1 Tim. vi. 16. I know that he is seated on a throne like the fiery flame, whose wheels are as burning fire; that thousand thousands minister unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him, Dan. vii. 9, 10. I know that the earth is burnt at his presence, the sea and the rivers dried up; that the mountains quake, the hills melt; that the rocks are thrown down, the pillars of heaven shaken, and that the seraphims cover their faces with their wings, Nahum i.; Isa. vi. But be not terrified, believing souls, at his glorious majesty, this royal pomp; for it is accompanied with tenderness and paternal love. Round about the throne of God there is a rainbow, in sight like unto an emerald, Rev. iv. 3, to signify that God is reconciled to us, and that his covenant of peace is for ever. As out of this magnificent throne proceed thunders and thunder-bolts, that fright the worldly-minded, and cast down the proud; so from thence likewise proceed such gentle lightnings, such lambent flames, as rejoice our souls, and guide them to their celestial inheritance. We are related to

God by a nearer tie than the angels and seraphims; for we are not only his creatures and servants, but also his children, and the members of his Son; nay, we are one with him, John xvii. 11. Let us therefore *give thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,* Col. i. 12.

Let us go with a holy boldness up to Mount Sinai; for there are no signs of God's wrath, or his just vengeance to be seen. We shall find there no bounds set to keep us at a distance from God, Exod. xix., but bands of love to draw and unite us unto him, Hosea xi. 4. Instead of the fire that affrights and devours, we shall perceive a mild pleasing flame, which burns without consuming, and which brings comfort, not fear. We shall not find there a lawgiver, who will drive us from him, and terrify us with his thunders; but we shall meet a loving Father, who opens his arms and his bosom to embrace us. In short, we shall not hear there the dreadful sound of the trumpet, that splitteth the rocks asunder, that breaketh the cedars, and maketh the hinds to calve, Psal. xxix. 5, 9; but we shall hear a sweet and melodious voice, that will quiet our trembling consciences, raise our drooping hopes, and fill us with peace and eternal consolation.

I acknowledge that God is just, but he is still more merciful, and mercy rejoiceth against judgment, James ii. 13. His justice is like the great mountains, but his mercies are as a great deep, Psal. xxxvi. 6. Therefore, Moses, who had a nearer sight of God than any living man, cannot be satisfied with extolling his mercy, and the overflowing riches of his love; for once that he names him *just*, he styles him five or six times, *merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,* Exod. xxxiv. 6; nay, even the word *righteous* or *just*, which he makes use of, frequently signifies, in the holy language, merciful, gracious and loving. God holds in his hand the sword of justice, but he is girded and clothed with mercy, as with a garment. In short, God is not only merciful and loving, but he is mercy and love itself, 1 John iv. 8. His compassion surpasses that of the best of fathers, or the most tender-hearted mother, as he himself declares by his prophet: Can a woman forget her suckling child, that she would not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet I will not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, Isa. xlix. 16; yea, in the bottom of my heart. These fatherly compassions appease his hot displeasure, and force him to let fall the sword of justice, as he tells us in Hosea,

How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, chap. xi. 8, 9. Therefore David had good reason to say with a holy confidence, *When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up*, Psal. xxvii. 10. Though all love and mercy were banished out of the earth, and all natural affections should be totally extinguished, yet my God will not forsake me while I live, and at the hour of death he will receive me into his bosom, and cover me with his wings.

Christian souls, let not the sad remembrance of your sins and former failings discourage you; for when we appear before the throne of God, we must not rely upon our own righteousness, nor be puffed up with an opinion of our own merits, but we must place all our confidence, all our hope, in the mercy of God alone; or, to speak with the prophet Daniel, We do not present our supplications before thee, O God, for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies, chap. ix. 18. The compassions of God are our merits. Till God shall want mercy, we can never want merit. Now the compassions of God fail not; they are new every morning, great is his faithfulness! Lam. iii. 23. As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked should turn from his way and live, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins, Isa. xliii. 25. Though your sins and iniquities appear before you with all the deformity and ugliness of hell, yet be not swallowed up of grief, nor cast yourselves into despair; let us rather say with the prophet Jeremiah, Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord. Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens, Lam. iii. 39, 40, 41; or with holy Micah, Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us: he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea, chap. vii. 18, 19. Let us comfort ourselves with these words of the prophet Daniel, To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against him, chap. ix. 9.

Tell me not again, I know that God is good and merciful, but

my sins are too many to believe that he will pardon and have mercy upon me. After all my repeated vows, my sighs, my groans and tears, I have returned to mine iniquities, as the dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire, 2 Pet. ii. 22. But, wretched sinner, learn for thy comfort, that though thy sins should be as many as the sand on the sea-shore, or as the stars in the firmament of heaven, yet if thou sincerely repenteth of them with a contrite heart, God will blot them out as a cloud, Isa. xliv. 22, and will cast them into the depths of the sea, Micah vii. 19. If thy brother shall trespass against thee, and afterwards confesses his fault, the Lord commands that thou shalt forgive him, not only until seven times, but until seventy times seven, Matt. xviii. 22; how much more reason hast thou to hope, that God, who is goodness and mercy itself, will pardon thee more sins, and oftener? Therefore, instead of continually probing thy wounds, receive the precious balm of his divine consolations, and say with the royal prophet, Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities: who healeth all thy diseases: who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies. The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins: nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children; so the Lord pitieth them that fear him, Psal. ciii. 13.

Answer me not, that your sins are so heinous and abominable, that you cannot hope for a pardon. Though they are as high as the loftiest mountains, if thou art really sensible of their weight, and sighest and groanest beneath thy burthen, God's infinite mercy, like a deluge, shall cover and wash them away. Like a torrent, it shall transport them out of thy sight. For where sin hath abounded, provided a true repentance succeeds, the grace of God doth much more abound, Rom. v. 20. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool, Isa. i. 18. All the offences that you have committed since you have been in the world, are finite and limited, but God's mercy is infinite. *If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But*

there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared, Psal. cxxx. 3, 4.

He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy, Prov. xxviii. 13; and it is certain, there is no sinner, let him be ever so guilty, that shall seek God's mercy by a true repentance, but shall obtain his request. David had defiled himself with an infamous adultery, and had imbrued his hands in the innocent blood of one of his most faithful servants; but as soon as he presented himself before God with a broken and contrite heart, Psal. li. 17; this merciful Creator washed this wretched sinner from all his iniquity at the fountain of his eternal mercy. He made him whiter than snow, and caused the bones which he had broken to rejoice; therefore he crieth out, *I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin,* Psal. xxxii. 5. King Manasseh gave himself up to enchantments and witchcraft, and to the most gross and abominable idolatries, Chron. xxxiii.; nevertheless, he no sooner humbled himself in his fetters, than his sighs and groans found a gracious reception at the throne of God. The poor Publican, in the gospel, cast down with the weight of his sins, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, *God be merciful to me a sinner,* Luke xviii. 13; but God looked upon him with an eye of mercy, and stretched out unto him his gracious hand; so that he went down to his house justified. The penitent Magdalen, being struck with horror at her own sinful and wicked life, came and cast herself at our Saviour's feet, washing them with her tears, and wiping them with the hairs of her head; but Christ soon raised her up, with these comfortable words, *Thy sins are forgiven thee. Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace,* Luke vii. 48, 50. St Peter, by a frailty that should cause the best of Christians to tremble for fear, denied his Lord and Master three times, even to cursing and swearing, Matt. xxvi.; Luke xxii.; but this merciful God immediately looked upon him with an eye of compassion, and gave him grace to weep bitterly for the commission of so foul a fact. At the same time that St Peter poured forth his tears before God, there is no doubt but God poured into his heart the oil of joy and gladness, and that he powerfully supported him by his Holy Spirit. Therefore, though your sins are ever so great and enormous, if your souls are really wrung with sorrow, if your hearts are truly touched with contrition, if you shed the tears of repentance, if you are heartily grieved that you are not sufficiently afflicted for your sins, and in such a

frame of mind prostrate yourselves before your heavenly Father, he will raise you up again by his infinite mercy. He will cast all your sins and transgressions behind him, and will cry unto you, by his Holy Spirit in your heart, *My Son*, or my daughter, *thy sins are forgiven thee*, Luke vii. 48. He will fill your souls with a joy unspeakable, and will cause you to sing with the Psalmist, Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile, Psal. xxxii. 1, 2.

Finally, think not it is too late to repent, and that when death is upon your lips, it is no longer time to have recourse to the mercy of God. As repentance cannot come too soon, because we know not at what hour God will call us ; so it can never come too late : for at what season soever the poor sinner melts into tears of repentance, provided his repentance be real, and that his tears proceed from the heart, God will always have the arms of his mercy ready to receive him. The thief that was crucified at our Saviour's side, was at the last gasp when he was converted, and when he preferred this excellent petition, *Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom*, Luke xxiii. 42. Nevertheless, this kind and merciful Saviour not only granted his request, but gave him the greatest of all consolations, *Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.* In like manner, although thou art at the point of death, yet since God speaks to thee, and awakens thy conscience, it is an infallible sign that he takes pity on thee, and that he would not have thy soul a cast-away. He opens for thee his heaven full of light and glory, and offers to thee his paradise, with all its immortal delights. Doubt not penitent sinner, but now is the accepted time, the day of salvation, and of God's good pleasure, 2 Cor. vi. 2. Since God thus graciously draws near unto thee, thou mayest with freedom draw near to him: and since he knocks at the door of thy heart, it is an infallible token, that he would have thee knock at the door of his mercy, and that he certainly intends to open it unto thee. In short, at what hour soever we go to God, and present ourselves before his throne, he holds out to us the golden sceptre of his mercy, and assures us of his love. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need, Heb. iv. 16.

To procure this grace and seasonable help, at a time so pressing, we have no occasion to make long prayers ; nor is it necessary they should be composed with the art and in-

dustry of human wisdom. We need only pray to God as our Father, and weep in his bosom ; call ourselves his children, and lay our hearts open before him. That alone is sufficient to move his compassion, and to inflame his love ; to appease his anger, and to draw down upon us his choicest blessings. The prophet Isaiah, the most eloquent of all men, seeks no other argument to wrest the thunder from the hands of his Creator, and to move the bowels of his mercy. Look down (saith he) from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness, and of thy glory : where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels, and of thy mercies towards me ? Are they restrained ? Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not : thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer ; thy name is from everlasting, Isa. lxiii. 15, 16. Likewise after having made this confession, We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness is as filthy rags, and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee : for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities ; he adds, But now, O Lord, thou art our Father : we are the clay, and thou our potter, and we are all the work of thy hand. Be not wroth, very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever : behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people, chap. lxiv. 6, 7, 8, 9.

By this dear and engaging name of Father, the prodigal son persuades himself, that he shall be able to move his father to compassion, and to touch his heart : I will arise, says he, and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son : make me as one of thy hired servants, Luke xv. 18, 19. Thus, though we have forsaken the house of our heavenly Father, mispent the riches of his grace, and lived a filthy and profane life : nevertheless, if we are touched with a serious and true repentance, and say unto him, from the bottom of our hearts, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son, he will not remember the sins of our youth, Psal. xxv. 7 ; but will cleanse us from all our secret faults, Psal. xix. 12 : nay, he will blot out all our wilful and presumptuous sins. He will not only receive us, when we cast ourselves at his feet, into the arms of his mercy, but he will run to meet us, and embrace us as his dear children, Luke xv. 20. He will kiss us with the bless-

ed kisses of his fatherly love, and will give us his Holy Spirit, the true seal of our pardon, Eph. i. 13, that we may be assured of being received into the glorious liberty, and admitted to all the privileges of his children, Rom. viii. 21. He will shoe our feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace, Eph. vi. 15; and will vouchsafe us all the precious evidences of our entire and perfect reconciliation. He will clothe us here below with the robes of righteousness and holiness, and in heaven he will add to us those of immortality and glory. In this life he will give us a foretaste of his delights; and in that which is to come, he will lead us into the marriage-chamber and will cause us to sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and with all the first-born, which are written in heaven, Heb. xii. 23. Not only all murmuring and envying shall be banished from this celestial abode, but there shall be joy for the conversion of poor sinners, and for their admittance into the kingdom of heaven. To these spiritual rejoicings, God himself shall invite all his angels of light, and the glorified spirits, saying unto them, It is meet that we should be glad; for these, my children were dead, and were lost, and are found, Luke xv. 32.

Let the slaves of Satan tremble, if they please, at the approaches of death, and let them look upon God with terror, as a severe judge. As for us, we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but we have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father, Rom. viii. 15. Let the sons and daughters of Adam, who have no other being than what they derive from his corrupt nature, fly from God's presence; as for us, who are regenerated by the Spirit of the second Adam, we will draw near to him with a holy boldness, we will not say as Adam, trembling and terrified with the horror of his crime, I heard thy voice, and I hid myself, Gen. iii. 10; but having learned in the school of the prophet, that we must obey God in all things, we will say unto him with Samuel, Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth, 1 Sam. iii. 10; or rather, O my God, and heavenly Father, speak when thou pleasest, for thy servant is ready and resolved to obey thy commands. We will not stay till God shall call the fourth time, as that holy man, who, because of his tender years, could not distinguish between God's voice and that of man; but we will have our ears always open to his divine orders; at the first signal, we will be ready to follow him, as the children of Israel, who decamped at his motion. And as when the Levites stopped and set down the ark in its place, Moses cried, Return, O Lord, unto the many

thousands of Israel, Numb. x. 36; likewise, you, believing souls, whom God hath chosen for his ark and temple, as soon as you shall perceive that this all-wise conductor will put an end to your painful journey; that is to say, as soon as you feel the least symptom of death, say, with a holy cheerfulness, Rejoice, O my soul, the time of thy freedom, and of thine eternal rest, is at hand: behold the messenger of good news! Here is death that will usher me into the palace of my heavenly Father! Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee, John xvii. 1.

When the hour was come, that our Lord Jesus Christ was to pass out of this world to the Father, he said to his disciples, who were troubled for his departure, If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said I go unto the Father; for my Father is greater than I, John xiv. 28. Christian souls speak in this manner to the hour of your departure. If such as are about you, weep and lament, if they endeavour to ensnare your heart, and stop you by the considerations of flesh and blood, say unto them, Why are you grieved at my deliverance, and at the end of all my deliverance, and at the end of all my miseries? Why will you retard my glory and happiness? O how cruel is your love! How blind your affections! Certainly, if ye loved me as ye ought, ye would prefer mine infinite satisfaction, the accomplishment of all my happiness, to the small advantages that ye can receive from my abode with you. Ye would consider, that the least spark of that joy which I shall feel in my heavenly Father's house, is a thousand times more worth than all the pleasures of the earth, all the honours of the age, and all the pomp and glory of the world. My friends, or rather, mine enemies, let me go; for I go unto my Father, John xvi. 10. I go to behold his face, in whose presence is fulness of joy, Psal. xvi. 11. I go to take possession of the inheritance prepared for me from the foundation of the world, Matt. xxv. 34.

XIX.

Prayer and Meditation for a faithful soul that comforts itself against the fears of Death, by relying upon the fatherly mercies of God.

My Creator and my God! I perceive that my dissolution draweth near, and that death hath already laid hold on me. It summoneth me to appear before thy tribunal, and terrifies

me with the remembrance of my sins, of which it presents a most frightful image to my view. O Almighty God ! when I think what I am, and what thou art, I remain altogether confused, and the sight of thy divine Majesty fills me with fear : for I am but dust and ashes, more inconsiderable than nothing; but thou art infinite in thy being and thy glory ; heaven is thy throne, and earth is thy footstool. I am surrounded with thick darkness, and thou dwellest in the light which no man can approach unto. Polluted as I am with sins, how shall I dare to approach thee, who art the Holy of Holies, and holiness itself ? How shall I, who am but chaff and dry stubble, stand before thy everlasting burnings ? O God of Gods ! if thou wert seated as judge upon thy magnificent throne, where thousand thousands minister unto thee, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before thee ; if I saw thee armed with thunder, and the fires which surround thee were like those on Mount Sinai, I should not only be afraid, and altogether astonished, but I should fall into the most horrid despair ; instead of presenting myself before thee, I should hide myself like Adam, and should endeavour to conceal myself from thine eyes, which are too pure to behold evil : I should say, with Moses, *I exceedingly fear and quake ;* I should cry out with the prophet Isaiah, *Wo is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips ;* and I should be moved to say, with thy holy apostle, *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.* But merciful God ! I see round about thy glorious throne a rainbow of an immortal colour ; I see the blessed tokens of my peace and eternal reconciliation with thee ; therefore I come boldly, as unto a throne of grace, that I may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Though thou art clothed with majesty and crowned with glory, thou holdest out to me the golden sceptre of thine infinite Majesty. Thou hast laid aside the arms of thy just vengeance, and hast put on the bowels of love and compassion. I hear no more that terrible thunder, which causeth the earth to quake, which breaketh the cedars, and maketh the hinds to calve ; but I hear with transports, a still small voice, which re-assures my trembling conscience, raiseth up my soul, cast down by grief and despair, and gives me certain hopes of the glory and happiness of thy heavenly paradise. I see no more that dreadful fire which devours sinners, but I feel the soft and pleasing flames of thy love, which rejoice and comfort me, and which, far from consuming me with the captains and sol-

diers of Ahaziah, carry me up into heaven with the prophet Elijah. The spirit which thou hast given me is not a spirit of bondage, to be again in fear, but a spirit of adoption, whereby I cry, *Abba, Father.* This spirit beareth witness with my spirit, that I am thy child, thy heir, and joint heir with thy blessed Son, Jesus Christ. If, when I was thine enemy, and the slave of Satan, thou didst reconcile me to thyself, by the blood of this thy beloved Son, now that I am thy child, wilt thou refuse me thine heritage? O my God and heavenly Father! I know that I have sinned exceedingly against thee, and that, if thou shouldst examine me according to the rigour of thy justice, I could have nothing to plead in my defence, nor any thing to expect but the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. But, O Lord! thou desirest not the death of a sinner, but that he turn from his way and live; for thus thou hast sworn by thyself, nor wilt thou repent. I confess that my sins are without number, and their deformity is day and night before me; but O Lord, where sin hath abounded, thy grace and mercy doth much more abound; and though my sins were as scarlet, thou shalt make them white as snow. Thou shalt be moved towards me with the same compassion wherewith a father is moved towards his child, and shalt remove my transgressions from me, as far as the east is from the west. Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee, and hath prepared for thee a perfect and eternal happiness. What I hear is not the call of death, but the voice of my heavenly Father, who calls me, and commands me to come unto him; therefore how wretched a sinner soever I am, I will come and prostrate myself at thy feet, and say unto thee, with the prodigal son, *Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.* O my Father and my God! thou hast given me the fairest portion of thine inheritance, the richest treasure of thy blesssing; but I am gone astray from thee, and have miserably abused thy favours. I have abandoned myself to all the follies of the world and the flesh, and evil conversations have corrupted my manners; insomuch, that from the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in me. In this wretched estate, I entreat pardon of my Judge, or rather, with all my soul, I implore thy Fatherly mercies. O divine flames! O inexhaustible source of charity! O God, who surpasseth in goodness the best of fathers, and the most tender mothers!

I see thy bowels moved, thy compassion awakened, and thy arms opened to receive me: nay, thou art not only ready to receive me to mercy, but thou comest thyself to meet me; and, far more kind than the father of the prodigal, comest to seek me in my filthy and most unclean abode, to save me from my wretchedness and distress. O unparalleled goodness! there is nothing which I may not hope for from thy fatherly tenderness. Thou shalt embrace me with the arms of thy infinite mercy, and kiss me with a kiss of charity and love. To assure me that I am received into the full liberty of thy children, thou shalt put a ring upon my hand; or rather, thou shalt put in my heart a white stone, whereon thou shalt write the new name of *elect* and *faithful*, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it. Thou shalt shoe my feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; or rather, thou shalt shed abroad in my soul the peace of God, which passeth all understanding. Thou shalt give me the fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of saints, and shalt clothe me with the Son of Righteousness. Thou shalt conduct me into thy house, or rather thy palace, where, instead of killing the fatted calf, we will celebrate the marriage of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. There we shall meet with the angels and blessed spirits, and in general, with all the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, who instead of murmuring or repining, will be ravished with joy, and adore this infinite mercy which thou hast manifested to us poor miserable sinners, who by an incomprehensible charity, have been made thy children, and heirs of thy kingdom. O charity! worthy the perpetual admiration of heaven and earth! We were all lost, but now we are all found again in God; we were all dead, but by death alone is the entrance into true life; we were in extreme misery, but by this very misery we are brought to perfect happiness. O God! unto thee I commit the keeping of my soul, as unto a faithful Creator. O heavenly Father! into thy hands I commend my spirit. *Amen.*

CHAPTER XV.

The third Consolation against the Fears of Death is, to meditate continually upon the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to rely upon the merits of his cross.

If we desire to die in peace, or with a quiet conscience, we must always meditate upon the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and rely upon the merits of his cross. For the death of this Prince of Life is the model of ours, a fountain of joy and comfort to believing souls.

1. By looking upon this perfect example, the admiration of men and angels, we learn to endure with a holy constancy, all the evils and pains that attend upon death. For though the torments of our blessed Saviour were extreme, insomuch that his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, Matt. xxvi. 38; and though his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground, Luke xxii. 44, through the violence of his agony; yet not the least murmur, the least impatient word, proceeded out of his sacred lips. He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth, Isa. liii. 7.

2. Moreover we learn, that the last hours of our life must be employed in fervent and continual prayers to God, seeing this beloved of the Father offered up unto him *prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, as unto him that was able to save him from death*, Heb. v. 7. In the bosom of his heavenly Father, he pours out all his sorrows, and three times he prefers this request, *O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me*, Matt. xxvi. 39.

3. We likewise learn to present ourselves before the divine Majesty with all humility, and to resign ourselves entirely to his adorable providence, since he *who thought it not robbery to be equal with God*, Phil. ii. 6, whom millions of angels and seraphims continually worship, was not ashamed to fall upon his knees three times to the ground, and to submit his pure and holy will to that of his heavenly Father;

for after he had prayed, *O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me,* he adds, *nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt,* Matt. xxvi. 39.

4. If an excessive sorrow, or any other malignant humour, seizes upon our minds, and hinders us from seeing the heavens open, and God stretching out his arms to receive us into his rest, let us imagine that this merciful Lord speaks to us as he did to his three apostles, who slept when he was in his agony, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Matt. xxvi. 40. My dear children, it is no time for you to slumber and sleep with the foolish virgins; trim your lamps, and put on the garments of light, that ye may follow your heavenly Bridegroom, and enter with him into the marriage chamber, Matt. xxv.

5. God requires us, at all times, to do as much good to our friends as we are able, and to express the most tender and cordial affection to those who are related to us by the ties of nature and piety; but more especially at the hour of death, we are bound to the practice of this religious duty. Jesus Christ himself hath set us a most excellent example: for when he was nailed to the cross, and ready to yield up his soul into the hands of his heavenly Father, he expressed a tender care of his holy and blessed mother, saying to the disciple whom he loved, Son, behold thy mother, and to her, Woman, behold thy son, John xix. 26, 27.

6. But we must not only do good to our friends, and extend the bowels of our kindness to them, we must also forgive our greatest enemies, even those that persecute us with the most inveterate malice. By this means we shall follow the blessed footsteps of our merciful Saviour, who prayed for them that crucified him and mocked him: Father, said he, forgive them, for they know not what they do, Luke xxiii. 34.

7. By the cross of Jesus Christ, we learn to put our trust in the goodness of God in our sharpest pangs, and to embrace him as our most loving Father and Redeemer, even when he seems to discover to us a countenance full of severity and wrath. For this eternal Son of God, in his most violent and cruel agonies, when his heavenly Father withdrew from him his aid, withheld the effects of his grace, the expressions of his love, and the comforts of his divine Spirit; yet looked upon him as his God, and prays to him with a holy assurance, repeating these pathetic words, *My God! My God!*

8. If we would die willingly, and leave these infirm

bodies with a holy cheerfulness, when the time is come that we must go to the Father of spirits, we ought to remember our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, with what constancy he prepared himself for death, and with what willingness he commended his unspotted soul into the hands of God his Father, when he required it. No man taketh it from me (says he), but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father, John x. 18. This drew from his sacred lips these divine words, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God, Heb. x. 9; and for this reason, when he gave up the ghost, he cried with a loud voice, Luke xxiii. 46; to show that his precious soul was not taken from him by violence, but that he offered it up a willing sacrifice.

9. From this excellent portrait of Christ crucified, we also learn what should be the last words, or at least the last thoughts of a dying believer; for if God grants us the use of our tongues till the last moment, we cannot end our lives better than with this comfortable expression used by our Saviour upon the cross, *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*, Luke xxiii. 46. But if we cannot move our lips, nor pronounce these words, we ought to revolve them inwardly in our minds, and pronounce them in our hearts.

10. By looking with attention upon the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall easily comprehend how strictly we are engaged to yield up our souls unto God, whenever he is pleased to call for them; for his blessed death is the price, the ransom that he hath paid for them. Now, if it be reasonable to render to every one that which belongs to him, especially that which he hath bought with a great price; and if it would be the most flagrant injustice to refuse to any man that which he hath purchased with the blood of his beloved, his only Son, with what face can we refuse our souls unto God, since they belong to him, not only as he is their Maker, who created them in his own image, but also as he is their Redeemer, who hath purchased them with the blood of his only Son, in whom, from all eternity, he is well pleased! We must not therefore wait, like bad paymasters, or the unjust possessors of other men's goods, till our souls are plucked from us by violence; but rather like the good and righteous debtor, we must return them willingly into his hands, who hath paid for them an infinite and inestimable ransom. This was the sentiment of the man, after God's own heart, when he cried, *Into thine hand I commit my spirit; thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth*, Psal. xxxi. 5.

11. From the death and passion of this glorious Redeemer, we not only learn our duty; it is likewise the source of all our hope, our joy; and if I may be allowed the expression, it is in the bowels of this dead lion, that we find our sweetest and most ravishing consolations. This high priest, who bears us upon his breast in his heavenly sanctuary, or rather in his heart, will not forsake us in the day of our distress, nor leave us a prey to the fears and pangs of death. For since he ath encountered with this cruel enemy, hath felt its sting, its horrors and pains, and hath in all points been tempted like as we are, yet without sin, Heb. iv. 15; he is merciful and faithful to have compassion on our infirmities, and no less able to succour us in our temptations, and to make us in all things more than conquerors.

12. Believing souls, consider with me this noble transport of St Paul, Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort: who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, 2 Cor. i. 3, 4. These excellent words may very well be applied to our Lord Jesus Christ, whom the Holy Ghost calls the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Heb. iii. 1. For the consolations which he received from God in the time of his greatest anguish, are a precious earnest, and infallible assurance of God's future help in our need. When in his agony, his soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death, there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him, Luke xxii. 43; so likewise, when we shall be engaged in the conflict of death, when it shall endeavour to fill our souls with fear and sadness, he shall send to us, to be our comforter, one of his good angels that stand at his right hand, I mean the faithful teachers of his holy word; or else he will send from heaven one of those blessed spirits that wait about his throne, and fly to the assistance of the faithful. The Holy Ghost himself, the comforter of afflicted souls, the true oil of gladness, will banish all sorrow from our hearts, and inspire us with unspeakable joys. He will not forsake us, till he hath brought us to the blissful source of everlasting consolations.

13. The deliverance of our Lord and Saviour, is, in some respects, an image, an assured token of our own, which we are to expect from God's mercy and Almighty power. For whereas St Paul saith, that this High Priest, in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save

him from death, was heard in that he feared, Heb. v. 7; we are not to understand by these words, that God exempted him from death; but that he gave him the power to swallow up death in victory, to triumph over the grave, and, by the bitter agonies of a shameful death, to enter into the glory and delights of paradise. Thus, when in our greatest distress, our dying agonies, we call upon God with a holy earnestness, and pour into his bosom the tears of a sincere repentance; he hears us from his sanctuary, and delivers us from death; not by exempting us from dying, but by making us pass through death to life, through misery to bliss.

14. In order to be fully persuaded, that God will not refuse us the joys and consolations of his Spirit, that he will make us more than conquerors over death, and will raise us to the height and glory, and eternal happiness, we need only cast our eyes upon this great God and Saviour: for since he that gives much will not refuse little, God that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Rom. viii. 32. St Paul teaches us to make use of this argument, which is as clear as the sun at noon-day.

15. At the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom; heaven was opened, and paradise given to a penitent thief. This is to show us, that we have the liberty to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the vail, that is to say, his flesh, Heb. x. 19, 20; and to assure us, that this merciful Saviour hath his arms always open to receive us to mercy, and that he refuseth not the glory of heaven, and delights of paradise, to the greatest sinners, who repent, and fly to his eternal mercies and infinite merit.

16. The death of this great God and Saviour is the payment of all our debts, and the blotting out of all our offences; the cure of all our complaints, and our deliverance from all our miseries. It hath vanquished Satan, triumphed over hell, and swallowed up death eternal. This precious death hath purchased for us heaven, with all its treasures, and hath merited for us paradise, with all its pleasures and delights. Nay, even before we are received into paradise, it plants paradise in our hearts, and fills them with a divine peace, and a joy unspeakable and full of glory.

17. The cross of the Lord of Glory, is like the wood which Moses cast into the waters of Marah, Exod. xv. 25; for it takes away from the corporeal death of God's children

all its bitterness, and makes us taste therein an inexpressible sweetness, which rejoices our souls. It is like the salt which the prophet Elisha cast into the waters of Jericho, to heal them, that they might render the land fruitful, 2 Kings ii.; for it causeth death to become wholesome to us, and to produce in us an abundant crop of divine comforts. I may also compare it to the meal cast by the same prophet into the pot, of which the sons of the prophets cried out, *O thou man of God, there is death in the pot*, 2 Kings iv.; for it is the destruction of death itself, seeing it deprives it of its mortal poison, and causeth us to taste therein a sweetness altogether angelic. I may also say of this glorious cross, that it is the *tree of knowledge, of good and evil;* seeing it acquaints us with the dreadful evils from which we are delivered, and the great benefits purchased for us by its infinite merits. I may likewise affirm it to be the true *tree of life;* since all those who put forth the hand of faith, pluck of its fruits, and eat thereof, live for ever, John vi. Know ye not believing souls, that this is the mysterious ladder that the patriarch Jacob saw in his dream? For it unites heaven with earth, sinful man with God. It pleased the Father (having made peace through the blood of the cross of his Son) by him to reconcile all things unto himself, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven, Col. i. 19, 20. By this blessed cross, the good angels come down to our assistance, and all the mercies and blessings of God descend upon us; and by this we ascend up to the heaven of heavens, and eternal happiness. At the foot of this divine cross our soul rests in security, and finds that peace of God which passeth all understanding, Phil. iv. 7. It is like the golden sceptre which king Ahasuerus held out to queen Esther, Esther v. 2; for if we touch this precious cross with the hand of faith, and embrace it with a contrite heart, we shall obtain of the King of Kings not only the half but the whole of his kingdom, with all its riches and delights.

18. Moses's rod was changed into a serpent, as well as those of Pharaoh's magicians; but this serpent swallowed up all the others, Exod. vii. Thus the death of our Lord Jesus Christ had its fear, its sorrow, and its agony, Matt. xxvi.; but his fear swallows up all our fears, and causes us to come boldly to the throne of grace; his sorrow drives away all our sorrows, and fills us with joy and eternal comfort; and his agony swells our hearts with triumph. The trouble and grievous conflicts of his spirit give repose and everlasting peace to our consciences. His bloody sweat dries

up all our tears; his groans put an end to our groans; and his loud cries cause us to sing songs of triumph. The bands of this glorious Saviour have purchased for us full liberty; and in his condemnation we are acquitted. He tasted vinegar and gall, and drank, even to the dregs, the cup of God's wrath and just vengeance, that he might give us to drink of the inexhaustible river of his delights. When he cried out, in the bitterness of his soul, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Matt. xxvii. 46; it was to the end that God should never forsake us, but, in all our distresses, should afford us his Almighty help and Fatherly assistance. He bowed his head to raise our hopes; and, finally, died to deliver them, who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to a severe and cruel bondage, Heb. ii. 15. So that they who tremble and are afraid of the approaches of death, have not yet felt the power and virtue of the cross of Christ; they tread under foot the blood of the Son of God; and, as much as in them lies, destroy the fruit and efficacy of his blessed death.

19. Think well upon these things, believing souls, and engrave in the bottom of your hearts this divine lesson, that death is not to be feared, except where it is accompanied by the wrath of God, and the curse of the law, and armed with our own sins and iniquities: where the devil follows it, as a roaring lion, seeking to devour us; and hell opens its infernal throat to swallow us up. But they who place their confidence and hope in the death and passion of the Saviour of the world, and embrace his cross, are exempt from all its fears, and impenetrable to all its darts.

20. Be not dismayed, therefore, Christian souls, at the sight of the Almighty Judge of the universe, seeing we have such an excellent Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. He hath disarmed the justice of God, and stopped the course of his vengeance: for God hath fore-ordained him to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, Rom. iii. 25. The Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, John v. 22; that is, as he is the Son of Man, there is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ, Rom. viii. 1. Even he that believeth on him hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life, John v. 24.

21. Be no more afraid of the thunder and lightning of Mount Sinai; and tremble no more with horror at hearing this dreadful sentence, Cursed be he that confirmeth not all

the words of this law to do them, Deut. xxvii. 26. For though the sacred hands of Jesus Christ were fastened and nailed to the cross, yet they have taken away the thunderbolts and arms of the divine fury. The precious blood which flowed from the wounds of this blessed Redeemer, hath quenched those devouring flames, those everlasting burnings. As at the time of his dolorous passion, he expressed a care, of his beloved apostles, saying to the officers who came to take him, If ye seek me, let these go their way, John xviii. 8. Even so, at this day, he takes care of all those that believe in his name, and putting them under the shadow of his cross, presents himself in their stead to divine justice, saying, Since thou hast laid hold on me, as their surety, and hast prosecuted me with so much rigour; since I have made ample satisfaction for all their sins and iniquities, and have tasted for them all the bitterness of the most cruel death, leave them the liberty which hath been purchased for them at so dear a rate, and suffer them to pass through death to the enjoyment of that blessed immortality, which is the price of my blood, and the fruits of my victories. This merciful Saviour hath, of his own accord, placed himself in our stead, and hath borne for us all the punishments due to our iniquities. He hath been scourged with the rod of Moses, pierced through by the darts of the law, and made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree, Gal. iii. 13. We are not only redeemed by him from the curse of the law, but we are blessed in him with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, Eph. i. 3. Being without Christ, we are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, having no hope, and being without God in the world. But now we who sometime were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ, Eph. ii. 12, 13. We have access, with confidence, by faith in this precious blood, Eph. iii. 12; and come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need, Heb. iv. 16. Rejoice, therefore, Christian souls, for ye are not come unto the Mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire; nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which voice they that heard, intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more. But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to

the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel, Heb. xii. 18, 19, 22, 23, 24. For the blood of Abel cried for vengeance against his own brother; but the blood of Jesus Christ pronounces mercy, pardon and forgiveness, even to them that were his enemies, in their mind by wicked works, Col. i. 21. If therefore when we are enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life, Rom. v. 10.

22. Fear not the devil, nor all the powers of hell; for according as it was foretold by the most ancient of oracles, The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head, Gen. iii. 15. The Lord of glory, having spoiled principalities and powers, hath made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross, Col. ii. 15. Through death he hath destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, Heb. ii. 14, and hath crushed in pieces the red dragon which swallowed up whole nations and people, Rev. xii. As the children of Israel, when bitten by fiery serpents in the wilderness, were healed by looking upon the brazen serpent which Moses set up, Numb. xxi.; so when ye feel in your souls the venomous and mortal bite of the old serpent, cast the eyes of your faith upon Christ crucified, and ye shall not perish, John iii. 14, 15. As the angel which smote all the firstborn of the land of Egypt, had no power to hurt those of the children of Israel, who had struck the lintel, and the two side posts of their doors with the blood of the paschal Lamb, Exod. xii. 23; even so the devil, who destroys the children of this world, hath no power over those who have sprinkled their hearts and consciences with the blood of the Lamb without blemish and without spot, 1 Pet. i. 19. And as Pharaoh and all his hosts were swallowed up and overwhelmed in the waters of the Red Sea, through which the children of Israel passed safely into the promised land, Exod. xiv.; thus Satan and all his angels, have been drowned in the precious sea of our Lord and Saviour's blood, who hath consecrated for us a new and living way to the heavenly Canaan, Heb. x. 20. Rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them! for the accuser of his brethren is cast down, which accused them before God day and night. And they overcome him by the blood of the Lamb, Rev. xii. 9, 10, 11. Believing souls, resist the devil, and he will flee from you, James iv. 7. Though he walketh round about you as a roaring lion seeking to devour you, 1 Pet. v. 8; yet be not afraid

of his roaring, nor his infernal throat; for he hath been overcome by the Lion of the tribe of Judah, Rev. v. 5, and is bound with a chain, whose length he cannot exceed, and which he shall never be able to break. Take the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, Eph. vi. 16, and say unto him with a resolute and undaunted courage, Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou hast no part in me. I belong to the Lord Jesus, who hath paid my ransom, bought me with his blood, and sealed me with his Holy Spirit. The gates of hell shall never prevail against them who are built upon the rock of eternity, Matt. xvi. 18.

23. Let not your sins cast you headlong into the gulf of despair, and cause you to let go the anchor of your hope, Heb. vi. 19. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life, John iii. 16. They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick, Matt. ix. 12. Our Lord came not to call the righteous, that is to say, those who are puffed up with a vain opinion of their own righteousness, but sinners to repentance; such as acknowledge and detest their own unworthiness. Those sacred arms which he stretched out upon the cross, are still open to receive you to mercy; and from the heaven of heavens where he inhabits, these gracious words still sound in the ears of your heart, *Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*, Matt. xi. 28. This merciful Lord came to seek the sheep that were gone astray, to save that which was lost, Matt. xviii. 11; and to redeem his people from their sins, Matt. i. 21. As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned, Rom. v. 12; so by the obedience of one we get the victory over death, and obtain the free gift of righteousness and immortality. This is the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world, John i. 29, and maketh entire satisfaction for all our offences. For as the ram which was caught in the thicket by his horns, was offered up to God for a burnt-offering in the stead of Isaac, Gen. xxii. 13; so this true Lamb of God, which was nailed to the cross, hath been offered up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour, Eph. v. 2. He hath borne our sins in his own body on the tree, and by his stripes we are healed, 1 Pet. ii. 24. He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, Isa. liii. 4, 5. As under the law the sins

and transgressions of the people were put upon the head of the scape-goat Azazel, Lev. xvi.; thus God hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. v. 21. Through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins, Acts x. 43. Instead, therefore, of falling into despair as Cain, Ahithophel and Judas, let us cry out with king David, Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered: Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, Psal. xxxii. 1, 2; and with the apostle St Paul, Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, Rom. viii. 33, 34. Embracing this crucified Redeemer, let us say with the blessed virgin, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour, Luke i. 46, 47; and sing with the triumphant saints, Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

24. If the multitude of your sins astonishes you, remember, Christian souls, that it is not said, that the blood of our Lord Jesus cleanseth us from only part of our sins, but in general, *If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just*, that is to say, true and merciful, *to forgive us our sins*, and that *the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin*, 1 John i. 7, 9. In whatsoever number, therefore, your sins appear before you, drown them all, as so many monsters of hell, in the blood of your Redeemer. Embrace this divine Saviour with the arms of faith and repentance; wrap yourselves in death; lean upon his cross, and rest yourselves under the shadow of his all-powerful intercession.

25. If the heinousness of your offences fill you with fear and terror, lay hold on the horns of this divine altar, and all the powers of hell shall not be able to pull you from thence. Comfort yourselves, ye sinners; for there is no spot so ugly and deep, but the blood of Jesus Christ is able to wash it away; no crime so abominable, which cannot be expiated by the sacrifice of this Lamb without blemish, 1 Pet. i. 19, which taketh away the sin of the world, John i. 29. Thy sins, of what nature soever they be, have their bounds and limits; but the merit of thy Redeemer is infinite, and its efficacy eternal. It was on purpose to encourage thee, that in his dying moments he manifested the greatest riches of his grace to a miserable thief, who suffered justly for his crimes,

Luke xxiii. As soon as he saw him touched with repentance, he changed his painful and ignominious cross into a paradise of glory and happiness, and filled his soul with the sweet consolations of his Holy Spirit. This merciful Redeemer is *the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever*, Heb. xiii. 8. Therefore how great and vile a sinner soever thou art, if thou bewailest thy vileness, and art pierced with the sorrows of a sincere repentance, thou hast no occasion to despair. Draw near, with all humility, to the cross of thy Saviour, and wash thyself in the blood which flows from his sacred wounds. All the impotent persons that went down into the pool of Bethesda, were made whole, of whatsoever disease they had, John v. 4. In the same manner, all the spiritually impotent, with whatsoever disease they are afflicted, find their cure in this divine pool. There is no occasion for them to wait till an angel comes down from heaven, to dispose this pool to work this miraculous effect; for the blood of Jesus Christ is always new and living, of the same virtue, Heb. x. We need not fear that others should step in before us, or that the multitude should hinder us; for millions of worlds may be made whole here in the same moment. Say not that you have no man to put you in this healing pool; for the Lord will at no time refuse you this divine favour. Though you had been confined to your bed for thirty and eight years, as the poor paralytic, or even were you nailed to the cross, as the thief of whom I have been speaking, yet that would not hinder you from plunging yourself into this precious pool, and partaking of its inestimable benefits. It not only washes away all our filthiness, and cures all our diseases; but it quickens the dead, and renders the living immortal. Whoever thou art that washest thyself in this precious blood, thou mayest cry out with the apostle of the Gentiles, This is a faithful saying, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Howbeit I obtained mercy, 1 Tim. i. 15, 16. The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. 2 Tim. iv. 18.

26. By this time you perceive, believing soul, that death is no longer to be feared, since all its darts are broke, its arms destroyed, and all its spoils nailed to the cross of Jesus Christ. You may there behold the claws of this old lion, the paws of this devouring bear, the teeth and poison of this infernal serpent, and the head of this monstrous dragon. You may there see death swallowed up in victory, and the Prince of

Life leading it in triumph. Follow therefore the triumphal car of this glorious Redeemer, singing, O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56, 57.

27. Consequently, if God approaches you under the vail of death, you must not be afraid, nor endeavour to hide yourselves from those piercing eyes, to which the darkness and the light are both alike, Psal. cxxxix. 12. Though of ourselves we are poor and miserable, and wretched, and blind, and naked, Rev. iii. 17, yet we have something to cover us which is far better than fig-leaves: for we have the leaves of the tree of life, which are for the healing of the nations, Rev. xxii. 2. These leaves which never fade, not only hide our nakedness, but adorn us. They are an everlasting righteousness, Dan. ix. 24; the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, 1 Cor. i. 30. They are the Lord Jesus himself, who is called, The Lord of our righteousness, Jer. xxxiii. 16. They are the precious garments of salvation, the magnificent robe of righteousness, Isa. lxi. 10, and the divine broidered work (Ezek. xvi. 10, 13), spoken of by the prophets. They are the marriage-robe made white in the blood of the Lamb, Rev. vii. 14, and the fine white linen, which is the righteousness of saints, Rev. xix. 8. Finally, they not only cover and adorn us, but heal us of all our diseases, and render us immortal.

28. If ye present yourselves before your heavenly Father, in this sweet-smelling raiment of Jesus Christ your eldest brother; or rather, if ye put on the Lord Jesus himself, ye shall not only obtain the first and most excellent blessing, but ye shall enter into possession of that incorruptible inheritance which he hath prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For the wages of sin is death: but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Rom. vi. 23.

XX.

Prayer and Meditation for such as fortify themselves against the Fears of Death, by meditating upon the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Merciful Saviour! who, of thine own accord, took upon thee our mortal flesh, to offer it a sacrifice unto God, help mine infirmity, and strengthen that faith and hope which thou hast kindled in my heart. I see death threatening me, and opening its infernal throat to swallow me up; but to obtain freedom from these terrors, I cast myself at the foot of thy cross, and lay hold on the horns of thine altar. I plunge myself in thy precious blood, put on thy righteousness, and wrap myself up in thy death. O divine Redeemer! I know that thou wast seized with fear and anguish at the approach of death; that thine agony was so violent, that drops of blood fell from thy sacred body, and that angels came down from heaven to comfort thee: whereas thy blessed martyrs went to death and torment with a holy joy, as to a delicious feast, or a pompous triumph. Thou didst pray with loud cries and tears, to be delivered from death, and that this cup might pass from thee, that thou mightest not taste of its bitterness. But, O Lord! thy death was quite of a different nature from mine, or that of thy blessed martyrs. Thy death was to make atonement for the sins of the whole world; whereas ours is not to satisfy the justice of God, but that we may reap the fruits of his eternal compassions. Thou hadst the heavy arm of his vengeance to sustain, and the fierce burnings of his wrath kindled against our iniquities, which thou didst willingly take upon thee. But instead of this consuming fire which thou hast quenched with thine own blood, we discover nothing but the soft and lambent flames of love. Instead of this revenging arm, whose weight thou hast borne, we see the arms of mercy open to receive us. Thy death, O Lord! was armed with our sins and iniquities, and with all the terrors of hell; but now those weapons of death are nailed to thy cross, and are the trophies and eternal monuments of thy glory. Thou wast not only exposed to the cruel darts of death, but also to all the horrid thunders, and dreadful curses of the law. Thou hast shielded us from these thunders with thy precious body, and hast redeemed us from this terrible curse, being made a curse for us, Gal.

iii. 13. Thou hadst not only death to encounter, but also him to destroy who had the power of death, and to break down the gates of hell. Thou hadst principalities and powers to spoil, and to make a show of them openly, triumphing over them in thy cross, Col. ii. 15. O incomparable Saviour! how marvellous are thy works! how worthy the perpetual admiration of men and angels! Thou hast drank, even to the dregs, the cup of God's wrath, that we may be excused tasting its bitterness; and hast taken upon thee all the punishment due to our sins and offences, that they may not be visited upon us. Thy violent pains appease my anguish, thy bruises and deep wounds are my cure and my health. Thy fears encourage me, and thy sharp agonies swell my heart with transport. Thy loud cries still my conscience, and thy bloody sweat dries up all my tears. Thy affliction comforts me, thy sorrows give me joy, and the bitterness of thy soul is my sweet consolation. Thy death is my victory, and thy cross my triumph. I will no more be afraid of death, since thou hast died to obtain for me life and immortality. O glorious and merciful Lord! the kingdom of heaven belongs to thee by a double right; as thou art the only Son of God, and the heir of all things, and as thou hast purchased it to thyself by the infinite merits of thy sufferings. Contented with one of these claims, thou hast made over to me the other, to the end I may possess this heavenly kingdom as the fruit of thy death, and the price of thy blood. In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust, let me never be put to confusion, Psal. lxxi. 1. I know that nothing that defileth, or that worketh abomination, shall enter into thy holy Jerusalem; but thy blood shall wash me from all my sins, and make me whiter than snow. O victorious Lord, how wonderful and precious is thy death! It is the payment of all our debts, the atonement for all our offences, and the ransom of the whole world. It is our peace with God, our re-union with heaven, and our reconcilation with the angels of light. It is the death of death itself, and the destruction of hell. It hath not only delivered me from the pit of eternal damnation, and the infinite torments of hell; but it hath purchased for me heaven with all its glory, and paradise with all its delights. We admire David for cutting off Goliah's head with his own sword! but shall we not rather admire thee, O victorious and triumphant son of David! who by death hath swallowed up death in victory? We extol Sampson, for destroying, at his death, a few of his enemies; but shall we not rather extol thee, O Almighty Son of Righteousness!

who, by thy death, hath destroyed all the enemies of our salvation, and amongst the rest death itself. The patriarch Jacob slept in security at the foot of that mysterious ladder, whose top reached to heaven, Gen. xxviii. But, O Lord, and my God! I shall rest much more secure, and find much sweeter repose at the foot of thy blessed cross, seeing by that I have free access to the Father, whom thou hast rendered propitious to me; and can come boldly unto the throne of grace, that I may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need, Heb. iv. 16. O Lord Jesus! I not only discover in thy cross the fountain of my sweetest consolations, and my greatest joys, and most aspiring hopes; but I learn from it the way to die in thy favour; and behold there, in their most excellent beauty, all those virtues which ought to accompany my soul at its departure from the body. O Lord! who art perfection itself, and hath set me so rich a pattern, to the end I may tread in thy blessed steps, grant me the grace to manifest to all my relations and friends, who are witnesses of this my last conflict, that holy and cordial affection, and all those tendernesses, wherewith I see thy bowels moved towards me. Grant that I may forgive according to thy example, all mine enemies, and even pray unto God for all those who have cruelly persecuted me; and that in my sharpest agonies, I may imitate thy meekness, patience and heroic constancy. Inflame me with that ardent zeal which hath eaten thee up, and kindled in my soul that fervent charity which hath consumed thy burnt-offering. Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God! Psal. xl. 7, 8. My soul is not mine own, but thine, who art the faithful Creator and merciful Saviour thereof; since thou hast paid its ransom, washed and made it white in thy blood, clothed it with thy righteousness, and put it into a condition to enter into the heavenly sanctuary, and to appear before the face of the Father of lights, dispose of it according to thy good pleasure. O sweet Jesus! who hast willingly suffered a shameful death for me, a poor miserable sinner, graciously grant that I may live and reign for ever with thee; and that I may be always ready to say unto thee, from the bottom of my heart, Into thy hand I commit my spirit; thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth, Psal. xxxi. 5. *Amen.*

CHAPTER XVI.

The fourth Consolation against the Fears of Death, is, to meditate upon our Lord Jesus Christ in his sepulchre.

It is so natural for mankind to abhor the grave, that few persons can pass through a church yard without dread, not only they who make their abode beneath gilded roofs, in stately palaces, but also they who reside in poor cottages, or in desert caves; they who are shut up in dark dungeons, and even they who have no other covering but the sky, cannot, without horror, reflect that this wretched body must go into the bowels of the earth, and lie down in a noisome grave.

To banish from our minds this dangerous apprehension and groundless fear, we must consider, with a religious attention, that we ought not to abhor the earth, seeing it is the matter of which our bodies were formed, and that it is, as it were, the mother from whence we proceed.

We must also remember, that it is the universal rule of nature, with respect to compounded bodies, that every part must return to its first principle. Therefore as the soul ascends up to its source, and returns unto God who gave it, Eccl. xii. 7, it is no wonder if the body returns to the earth, from whence it was taken, according to the irrevocable sentence pronounced by God in the earthly paradise, Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return, Gen. iii. 19. Nicodemus inquired of our Lord Jesus Christ, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? John iii. 4. As gross and extravagant as this imagination appears, it is, in some measure, verified upon this occasion; for we must enter a second time into the womb of the earth, our common mother, that we may be born again, and pass into another life.

Jesus, the son of Sirach, had the same thought when he expressed himself in this manner in the 40th chapter of his book of Wisdom, otherwise called Ecclesiasticus, Great travail is created for every man, and a heavy yoke is upon the sons of Adam, from the day that they go out of their mother's womb, till the day that they return to the mother of all things, ver. 1.

We shall find it for our advantage to meditate often upon those beautiful images which St Paul hath set before our eyes in the 15th chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians; and to remember, that it is with our bodies as with the seed which is cast into the earth, that it may bring forth: Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die, 1 Cor. xv. 36. It cannot flourish without it rots. Naturalists inform us that the corruption of one thing is the generation of another: but upon this occasion we may affirm, that the corruption of this miserable body, contributes to its own generation. You that weep for your friends and kindred, when you see them laid in the grave, remember the words of the royal prophet, They that sow in tears shall reap in joy, Psal. cxxvi. 5.

Remember that death is the way of all the earth, Josh. xxiii. 14, and that the grave is the house appointed by God for all living, Job xxx. 23. So that to be unwilling to enter into it, is to desire Almighty God to grant us a lodging by ourselves, to change the course of nature, and to create for us a new world.

The grave is not only the house appointed for all living, it is also the bed where they rest after their painful and laborious race. Therefore the prophet Isaiah, speaking of the death of the righteous, saith, They shall enter into peace; they shall rest in their beds, chap. lvii. 2: that is, with regard to the blessed estate of their souls, they shall enter into that great and eternal peace that reigns in heaven: but with respect to their bodies, they shall rest in their beds.

For the same reason, the places set apart to bury the dead, were anciently called *dormitories* or *sleeping places*, to teach us, that they lie there asleep, in expectation of that great day when God shall awaken them with the sound of the archangel's trumpet.

Therefore when the patriarch Jacob was ready to yield up his soul unto God, he commanded his son Joseph, saying, Bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt: but I will lie with my fathers, Gen. xlvii. 29, 30. Holy Job speaks in the same manner, I shall sleep in the dust, chap. vii. 21. And God himself, says to his servant Moses, Thou shalt sleep with with thy fathers, Deut. xxxi. 16; and to king David, When thy days shall be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, 2 Sam. vii. 12. And the prophet Daniel, speaking in general of all those who have died since the creation of the world, says, They sleep in the dust of the earth, chap. xii. 2.

In particular, take notice, Christian souls, that when God

spoke to Moses out of the midst of the burning bush, he said unto him, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, Exod. iii. 6. These patriarchs had been dead many ages; nevertheless God calls himself their God. Now, God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, Matt. xxii. 32. These holy men were not dead in respect of their souls, seeing those are immortal, and bound up by God in the bundle of life. Likewise their bodies, properly speaking, were not dead, but slept in their graves. As our Saviour said of Jairus's daughter, The maid is not dead but sleepeth, Matt. ix. 24; and of Lazarus, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, John xi. 11.

Moreover, we may truly say, that the condition of our bodies, in that state which we call death, is far better, and more easy, than that of our ordinary sleep; for during the latter we are often disturbed, we labour and sweat; nor are the richest and most magnificent couches exempt from these evils: whereas in the grave our bodies are incapable of suffering, and secure from all the attacks of pain. They enjoy a perfect sleep, an undisturbed repose.

The greatest princes, the most superb monarchs, are constrained to enter, one after the other, into this house appointed by God for all living; and to repose themselves upon that bed which he hath prepared for all the children of Adam. The sacred history, after having given us an account of the reigns of the kings of Judah and of Israel, adds at the close of each, and he slept with his fathers. Let us be ever so poor and miserable, we shall enter into this dwelling of kings, and lay ourselves down in the same bed. Therefore when Job complains, through the extremity of his grief, that he had not died immediately after he was born, he says, For now should I have lain still, and been quiet; I should have slept: then had I been at rest, with kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves; or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver, chap. iii. 13, 14, 15.

It is in this house, and upon this bed, that the patriarchs and prophets rest, the apostles, evangelists, martyrs, and, in general, all the faithful who have lived in all ages of the world; as it is recorded of St Stephen, that when he had commended his spirit into the hands of the Lord Jesus, he fell asleep, Acts vii. 60. Therefore St Paul, reproving the Corinthians, and representing to them that God had visited them with divers diseases, and with death, because they

had profaned the Lord's supper, tells them, For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep, 1 Cor. xi. 30; and speaking in general of those who are dead in the Lord, he says, they sleep in Jesus, 1 Thess. iv. 14; and he styles them, They which are fallen asleep, 1 Cor. xv. 18. Now what are we better or nobler than the saints of paradise, to expect that our bodies should be treated more favourably than theirs?

But there is nothing more capable of removing this horror of the grave, than the consideration of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who entered into it like other men, and rested in it for a season. He hath sanctified it by his divine presence, and hath filled it with celestial odours. He hath made it the object of our wishes, and the cause of all our glory; for there is no subject but thinks it an honour to lodge in the same palace where his prince has lodged before, and lie down upon the bed where he had taken his rest, though he had remained there but an hour, or a moment. O blessed sepulchre! where death and life, disgrace and glory, are found together; nay, what is more, the Prince of life, the fountain of honour and happiness.

Christian souls, who desire to banish from your minds all fears of death and apprehensions of the grave, look upon the sepulchre with the same eye, as if you behold Jesus Christ, the King of Glory, the Prince of your salvation, still remaining there. The patriarch Jacob, when he heard the false report of his son Joseph's death, refused to be comforted, and cried out in the bitterness of his soul, I will go down into the grave, unto my son, mourning, Gen. xxxvii. 35. But the certain tidings of the death and burial of our true Joseph, fills us full of unspeakable gladness, and causes us to cry out in a different manner, I will go down into the grave unto my father, with a holy joy. The prophet Elijah raised to life a child, which was carried up into the loft where he abode, and laid upon his bed: for having stretched himself upon the dead body, the soul that was departed came again, 1 Kings xvii. 22. And the prophet Elisha raised another in the same manner, by lying upon the child, and putting his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands, 2 Kings iv. 34. But, believing soul, God works for thee this day, a far more wonderful miracle; for the resurrection and the life proceed from our great prophet, dead and stretched out in his grave. If we go down into this holy sepulchre, if we stretch ourselves upon this precious and heavenly body, if we embrace it with a true and lively faith,

and a sincere repentance, he will not only raise us up again, but will cause us to become immortal. For whereas he was pleased to enter into the state and condition of the dead, it was to purchase for us a blessed and glorious immortality.

XXI.

Prayer and Meditation for a Christian, who strengthens himself against the horrors of the grave, by looking upon our Lord Jesus Christ laid in his sepulchre.

Adorable Mediator, between God and man! thou art God immortal, and yet hast vouchsafed to take upon thee our mortal nature, to die for me a miserable sinner, and to remain for a time in the state of the dead, that thou mightest purchase for me a blessed immortality. Give me grace to meditate as I ought upon thy sacred body, wound up in linen clothes, and laid in the sepulchre: for by this means, O sweet Jesus! I shall no longer have the grave in abhorrence, but shall look with a steadfast countenance, while the pit is digging, into which I must enter when thou shalt appoint. For the servant is not greater than his master; nor is it for the creature to prefer itself above the Creator. Since I expect to share in thy glory and exaltation, it is but just and reasonable that I partake in thy disgraces and abasement. My reason, enlightened by thy Holy Spirit, convinces me, that I must be wrapped up in thy darkness, and remain, like thee for a season, in the valley of the shadow of death, since I hope to be clothed, one day, with thy light, and crowned with thy life. I shall not only look upon the grave without fear, but I shall consider it with a holy joy, since thou hast honoured it with thy divine presence, and perfumed it with celestial odours. I shall look upon it with the same eyes as I should if thou wert still remaining there, my Lord and my God, and I was to lie down by thee. A dead man revived upon touching the bones of thy prophet, 2 Kings xiii. 21; but I not only touch thee, O Prince of prophets! I embrace thee by faith, as dead for my sins, and as resting in the grave for my salvation. Therefore thou shalt make me feel thy divine power; thou shalt sow in me the seed of immortality, and lift up my hopes to heaven. During its abode here below, my soul shall have part in the first resurrection, and one day, this infirm body shall be clothed with newness of life. If my resurrection be not so sudden and

speedy as that of the dead man raised by the prophet, it shall be far more glorious and lasting; that I may bless thee with all thy saints, and praise thee for ever with thine inheritance. *Amen.*

CHAPTER XVII.

The fifth Consolation against the Fears of Death, is to meditate upon the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As there is nothing more grievous and insupportable than to behold a proud imperious enemy, who is always defying us, yet always victorious, and whom no one can overcome; so there is nothing more capable of transporting us with joy and comfort, than to see such a pride cast down, and to triumph over such an enemy. It was this made the children of Israel, who had groaned a long time under the cruel tyranny of Pharaoh, sing with so much exultation their song of triumph and thanksgiving, when God destroyed that wicked tyrant, and buried him and his host in the waters of the Red Sea, Exod. xv. For the same reason, when the great dragon, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world, was overcome and cast down from heaven into the earth, a loud voice of Jubilee was heard in paradise, saying, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accuseth them before our God day and night. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them, Rev. xii. 10, 12.

From hence we are to infer, Christian souls, that as it hath been a most sensible affliction to us, to behold death tyrannizing over all the world, and shutting up in its prisons, kings and princes, patriarchs, prophets, apostles and martyrs, and in general all the children of Adam, of every rank and condition; so it is a great comfort and unspeakable joy for us, to behold this cruel and proud enemy overcome, and disarmed; and to see our Lord Jesus Christ marching out of his strong hold, laden with its spoils. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them, for the murderer of our brethren is swallowed up in victory.

As we are members of this victorious and triumphant Chief, we ourselves have a share in this honour and glory. In his person we are the conquerors over death, and are able to say with the apostle, That God hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, Eph. ii. 5, 6.

This Prince of Life hath not only loosed the pains of death, Acts ii. 24, and broke all his chains, but he hath led it away captive, and subjected it to his heavenly empire. He hath an absolute power over it, as he himself declares in these divine words, I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death, Rev. i. 18.

If this invincible Lord, when he was in the prison of death, commanded over death itself; if he broke in pieces its iron bars and its brazen gates, if he caused the dead to arise, and to go into the holy city; now that he is out of the sepulchre victorious and triumphant, will he not exercise an uncontrollable power over this dreadful enemy, whom he hath vanquished and brought under by his Almighty arm.

O Death! fret and foam with rage and fury as long as thou wilt, these eyes behold thee fast bound to the triumphal car of Jesus Christ my Saviour; and I am certain, that thou canst attempt nothing without his leave, and that thou canst not go a step unless he lengthens thy chain.

As Joshua, when he had overcome the kings of the Canaanites, called for his captains, and said unto them, Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings, fear not, nor be dismayed, Josh. x. 24, 25; thus you, Christian souls, imagine to yourselves, that our divine Joshua, who hath overcome death, calls unto you from heaven, saying, tread upon this wretched tyrant with boldness, fear not, nor be dismayed.

The children of Israel, who trembled at the threats of Goliah, laid aside all their apprehensions, when they saw him fall by a stone from David's sling, so that the most timorous could have freely put their feet upon his neck, 1 Sam. xvii.; and shall not you, Christians, banish from your hearts all fear and dread of death, now you see it overthrown at the feet of our true David, the great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls? For though it opens its jaws and vomits out flames of fire, it hath, nevertheless, received its fatal wound, and is at the last gasp.

As the armour-bearer of Jonathan, the son of king Saul, slew those which fell before his master, 1 Sam. xiv. 13;

thus we need only pursue the glorious victories of the Son of the King of Kings ; or rather, we need only gather up the sweet and pleasant fruits of his conquest : for this Prince of Life, who hath overcome death for us, will complete his conquest over it in us with those very weapons with which he hath armed us. In short, to speak properly, there is no death for such as are incorporated in Jesus Christ by a true and lively faith. For whosoever liveth, and believeth in him, shall never die ; and he that believeth in him, though he were dead, yet shall he live, John xi. 25, 26.

XXII.

Prayer and Meditation for a Believer, who arms himself against the Fears of Death, by meditating upon the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Lord Jesus ! who hast been fully declared the Son of God, with power, by the resurrection of the dead, who livest for ever and ever, strengthen me in my weakness, comfort me in my sorrow, and drive from my soul all fear and apprehension of death. Adorable Saviour ! I have no longer any thing to dread from this proud and cruel enemy, seeing thou hast loosed its pains, broken in pieces all its fetters, and hast overcome death and the grave. O glorious and triumphant Monarch ! shall I tremble before a discomfited and disarmed enemy, whom I see lying under thy feet, and chained to thy triumphal chariot? I need only follow the sacred footsteps of thy victory, and gather its noble fruits. If, when thou wast shut up in the prison of death, thou wast able to make it sensible of thy power, to bring down its pride, and to carry away its prisoners, what may I not expect from thy victorious and almighty arm, now thou hast the keys of death and of hell ? O most mighty and merciful Lord ! thou hast not only overcome death for me, but thou wilt also overcome it by me, who am thy child, and the sheep of thy pasture, whose ransom thou hast paid. Thou art not only risen from the dead, but thou art the resurrection and the life, John xi. 25. Thou art the Prince of Life, the fountain of glory and immortality ; so that whosoever liveth, and believeth in thee, shall never die ; and he that believeth in thee, though he were dead, yet shall he live. It seems an admirable action in Sampson, that when he had slept till midnight, he rose up, took the gates of the city of Gaza upon

his shoulders, and carried them to the top of a high mountain, Judges xvi.; but who would not admire thee, O invincible Nazarite! who, having slept till the third day, in the bowels of the earth, rose again by thy own divine power, carried away the gates of hell, and hast made them become the gates of heaven, the entrance into the celestial paradise! Let me die, since my Redeemer liveth, and will conduct me through death into a happy life, purchased for me with his most precious blood, and secured to me by his glorious resurrection. *Amen.*

CHAPTER XVIII.

The sixth Consolation against the Fears of Death, is the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven, and his sitting down at the right hand of God.

It is indeed a great joy and comfort to behold a proud and cruel enemy overcome and disarmed, and ourselves freed by that means from the yoke of an insupportable tyranny, but our joy would be turned into grief, our comfort into the most bitter affliction, if at the same time we beheld the author of our deliverance drowned in his own blood, and expiring in the moment of his victory. To render our satisfaction complete, it is necessary that his triumphs should be lasting, and that he should be advanced to the height of glory and sovereign power. Now there is no enemy more cruel, more tyrannical and formidable than death. We have beheld it disarmed upon the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and entirely vanquished and subdued by his resurrection; but if with the eye of faith we look a little higher, to the glorious ascension of our divine Saviour, we shall see this same death bound to his triumphant chariot, and this conquering Redeemer exalted above the highest heavens, and sitting in glory at the right hand of God. We shall see him invested with an almighty power, adored by all creatures, and exercising a sovereign dominion, not only over the angels of light, and the celestial spirits that surrounded his magnificent throne, but likewise over the world, death, the devil and hell; for because he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, therefore God also hath highly

exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father, Phil. ii. 8, 9, 10, 11.

Every soldier shares not in the triumph of his general, and all subjects taste not of their prince's happiness; but as we are the brethren of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the members of his body, we have a share in his triumph, and in the glory of his empire. Therefore the apostle St Paul tells us, that our life, that is to say, our glory and eternal felicity, is hid with Christ in God, Col. iii. 3; and again, in more express words, that God, who is rich in mercy, hath made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, Eph. ii. 6.

This glorious Saviour is gone to take possession of the kingdom of heaven, not only in his own name, but also in ours. This he assures his holy apostles, and in them all true believers, In my Father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you, John xiv. 2. In the same manner he speaks in that admirable prayer, in which he consecrates himself to God, for the great work of our redemption, Father I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me, John xvii. 24. Therefore the apostle to the Hebrews gives us this strong consolation, that Jesus Christ is entered for us into heaven as our forerunner, Heb. vi. 20.

As the high priest of the Jews went into the earthly sanctuary, to present himself before God for the people, Heb. ix.; so our Lord Jesus Christ is entered into the heavenly sanctuary, to appear for us in the presence of God. The high priest of the Jews bear upon his breast and shoulders the names of the twelve tribes of Israel; but Jesus Christ hath engraven us in his heart, according to the song of the spouse in the Canticles, Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm; for love is strong as death, chap. viii. 6. To conclude, the high priest of the Jews laid aside the names of the twelve tribes with his sacerdotal garment; but neither death, nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, Rom. viii. 38, 39.

The royal crown that was set upon Esther's head, caused her not to forget her people, and her father's house. She was exceedingly grieved for Haman's conspiracy, and the decree which he had obtained, wrote in king Ahasuerus's name, and sealed with his ring, Esther iv. Thus I can truly

affirm, that the glory to which our Lord Jesus Christ is exalted, hath not made him forget the people whom he hath purchased with his precious blood. He is not unmindful of the continual machinations of Satan, nor of the sentence of death pronounced against us by the great monarch of the world, and confirmed by his seal. Though his glorious head is crowned with a rainbow, his merciful heart is inflamed with love.

On that glorious throne, where thousand thousands minister unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousands stand before him, Dan. vii. 10, he is not ashamed to call us brethren, Heb. ii. 11, and to entreat God for us. He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them, Heb. vii. 25. If his Father always heard him, even when he was in his greatest abasement, can we imagine that his intercession will be fruitless, now he is ascended up into the highest glory.

From this exalted state, he beholds all our encounters and our skirmishes with death. He sees all the enemies that assault us, and the dangers to which we are exposed. He knows the deep malice, and crafty violence of the enemies of our salvation, and sees all the darts which they let fly against us. Therefore he covers us with his shield, and will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able, 1 Cor. x. 13. His strength is made perfect in our weakness, 2 Cor. xii. 9; and he makes us in all things more than conquerors, Rom. viii. 37. He not only keeps his eye continually upon his sheep, but he keeps them in his hand, and none is able to pluck them out of it, John x. 28.

If, when he was upon earth, in his grievous agony, at the bare words of his mouth, at his saying, *I am he*, his enemies went backward, and fell to the ground, John xviii. 6; and if, when he was in the prisons of death, he forced it to obey him; now that he is exalted above the highest heavens, in the glory of his triumph, shall he not have a sovereign power over death, the world and hell?

If, when he walked upon the waters, he cried to his apostles, *Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid*, Matt. xiv. 27; how much rather will he speak to us in this manner, now he sits upon a throne that cannot be shaken? Christian soul, that tremblest at the approaches of death, imagine, that the Lord Jesus, crowned with glory, calls to thee from heaven. Fear not, it is I that calls thee, and stretch out my arms to receive thee; I that am thy Saviour and Redeemer, who have washed away all thy sins with my blood, and have re-

deemed thee from the curse of the law and eternal damnation; I who have disarmed God's justice, vanquished hell, broken the serpent's head, and swallowed up death in victory; who have purchased for thee the glories of heaven, and the delights of paradise; who have trod under foot the world and all its powers; who am worshipped by all the church triumphant in heaven, and by legions of angels that fly about my throne. Some of these I will send to guard thee; and when thou shalt leave that body in which thou now livest as a stranger, they shall bear thy soul upon their wings, to this magnificent abode of immortality, whither I am come to prepare a place for thee.

Without doubt, if the anchor of our hope is entered into that within the vail, that is to say, into heaven, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus Christ, Heb. vi. 19, 20, we shall not fear the most contrary winds, the most raging storms, raised against us by the prince of the power of the air, that now worketh in the children of disobedience, Eph. ii. 2; we shall tread under foot all the billows of this boisterous sea, and through these swelling waves shall safely come to our divine Jesus. If at any time we begin to sink, and our soul is seized with fear, this Almighty Lord, who hath not only saved himself, but is also the Saviour of his church, will say to us, as to St Peter, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? Matt. xiv. 31. Knowest thou not, that I command the winds, rebuke the waves, and still the tempest, that I have the keys of hell and of death? Rev. i. 18.

When a person, in his way to a place of rest and happiness, which he earnestly desires to arrive at, is to go through a painful and thorny passage, he takes new courage, if he sees before him a powerful friend, who stretches out his arm to assist him. Now it is not possible for us to arrive at the glories of heaven, and the joys of paradise, except through the passage of death; a painful and grievous passage to flesh and blood! But Jesus Christ, who loves us unto the end, John xiii. 1, hath gone this way before us. He is ascended from this world unto the Father, to his God, and to our God, John xx. 17; and that we may go where he is, he hath not only sent us his light and his truth to lead us, Psal. xliii. 3, his rod and his staff to comfort us, Psal. xxiii. 4; but he also stretched out his almighty hand, to cause us to pass from death unto life, Where I am, saith he, there shall also my servant be, John xii. 26.

When the apostles were in the way going up to Jerusalem,

and our Lord Jesus Christ went before them, they were amazed, as they followed, and were afraid, Mark x. 32 ; but we that go up to the heavenly Jerusalem, and tread in the footsteps of this mighty Saviour, ought to be full of holy boldness and Christian confidence.

Our knowledge that this great God and Saviour reigns triumphant in heaven, and that he commands in the earth, the sea, and the great deep, teaches us, that we should not only submit to death without fear, but that we should embrace it with a holy joy ; for who would not rejoice to enter into the glorious palace of immortality ; where we shall see, not only the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, the holy and blessed virgin, with all the saints of paradise, but where we shall also see, face to face, our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, whom so many kings and prophets have desired to see and hear, Luke x. 24. Whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from this victorious Lord ; therefore we are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord, 2 Cor. v. 6, 8. This consideration caused the holy apostle to cry out, I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better, Phil. i. 23.

The queen of Sheba left her kingdom, and came from a far country, to see king Solomon, who was but a type of Christ, and had but a faint ray of his wisdom and glory, 1 Kings x. ; and is there any treasure on earth, any honour or pleasure in life, that we would not leave with transport to go and see our Lord and Saviour! When he was in his infancy, the shepherds left their flocks, and hastened to Bethlehem to look upon him, Luke ii. The wise men came from the east to worship him, Matt. ii. ; and was he now upon earth, in that estate, we should run from the utmost ends of the world, and part with all our dearest enjoyments, to see him. But the little town of Bethlehem is nothing in comparison of the heavenly Jerusalem ; and what would be the sight of our Lord Jesus Christ in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger, or in the arms of his blessed mother, in comparison of seeing him clothed with light, crowned with glory, and sitting at the right hand of God the Father, upon a magnificent throne, worshipped by all the angels and glorified spirits ? If the father of the faithful rejoiced and was glad to see, in spirit, the day of the Lord, John viii. 56 ; if, when the spouse in the Canticles heard him at her door, her bowels were moved for him, chap. v. 4 ; and if old Simeon was ravished above measure, when he held Christ in his arms, Luke ii. ; how much more shall we be ravished and transported with admiration

and joy, when we shall behold him, as he now is, in his highest glory and state, and shall embrace him for ever and ever? When St Stephen saw the heavens opened, and Jesus Christ standing on the right hand of God, Acts vii. 56, his face became shining, as it had been the face of an angel, Acts vi. 15; with what rays of glory then shall we be crowned, when we shall enter into this palace of light, and behold for ever, face to face, this blessed Redeemer?

When the patriarch Jacob heard that his son Joseph, whom he tenderly loved, and for whom he had shed so many tears, was still alive, and governor over all the land of Egypt, he earnestly desired to see again this dear son, and to be a witness of his glory: It is enough, said he. Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die, Gen. xlv. 28. And you, believing souls, who hear this day, that your true Joseph, whom you passionately love, lives and reigns in heaven, where he is worshipped by all the glorified spirits, do you not ardently desire to see his face, and to behold his glory, and the magnificence of his triumph? The patriarch Jacob was feeble through age, and bowed down with sorrow, but his spirit revived when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him; thus you, my Christian brethren, whose bodies old age or sickness hath bowed down, and whose hearts care and sorrow hath undermined, do not you find yourselves strengthened, do not you feel yourselves sensibly revived, when death draws near, and you perceive, with the eyes of faith, the horses and chariots of fire which Christ hath sent to convey you to the paradise of his glory? Joseph received his father and brethren with tears of joy, and all the house of Pharaoh rang with acclamations of gladness; with what tenderness then will Christ embrace us? What rejoicing will there be in heaven at your arrival? The tongues of angels alone can express a joy so unspeakable and full of glory. Joseph fed his father and his brethren, but he never imparted to them any portion of his authority and glory; whereas our Lord Jesus Christ, who excels Joseph as much in power and magnificence, as in love and compassion, shall not only feed us with the bread of his kingdom, and give us to drink of the river of his pleasures, but he will also make us partakers of his glory, and magnificence of his empire, as he promised to his holy apostles: I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me, Luke xxii. 29. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne, Rev. iii. 21.

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life, Rev. ii. 10. Joseph's brethren, notwithstanding his greatness, became slaves; but Jesus Christ will place upon each of our heads a crown of pure gold. Joseph could not preserve his brethren from death; they all died one after another; and he also, in his turn, gave up the ghost; but Jesus Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him, Rom. vi. 9. He is not only alive for evermore, but will likewise cause us all to become immortal. Whereas, then Jacob desired to live that he might go down into Egypt to see his son Joseph, we should ardently desire to die, that we may ascend up into heaven, there to behold our Lord Jesus Christ, who is both our Father and Redeemer. When Jacob embraced again this wonderful and beloved son, he cried out, in the transport of his joy, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive: on the contrary, when we shall embrace Christ in his glory, and shall behold the light of his countenance, we shall say unto him, in a different manner, My Lord and my God, since I now see thee alive, and reigning in heaven, I shall also live and reign with thee for ever and ever. *Amen.*

XXIII.

Prayer and Meditation for a believing soul, which arms itself against the Fears of Death, by meditating on the glorious Ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven, and his sitting down at the right hand of God.

O holy and Divine Saviour! to strengthen myself against the fears of death, I have already looked upon thy noble conflicts and glorious victory; that my joy may be perfect and accomplished, grant me the grace, that I may also behold thy magnificent triumph. As thou hast fought for me, and made me partaker of the fruit of thy victories, grant that I may also share in the honour of thy triumph. As thou hast suffered for my offences, and art risen again for my justification, so thou hast ascended up into heaven to prepare a place for me. Thou art willing I should be admitted into thy divine palace, that I should be where thou art, and that I should behold thy glory, which thou hast enjoyed with God the Father, before the foundation of the world. O sweet and merciful Lord! what reason have I to fear going to hea-

ven, since thou art seated there in the highest glory and happiness, and stretchest out thy arms to receive me? May I not rather expect to be glorified in thy kingdom, since thou bestowest upon all them that serve thee, immortal crowns and sceptres? O Almighty God and Saviour! thy throne is surrounded with infinite majesty and splendour; nevertheless I will come boldly unto it, forasmuch as it is a throne of love and mercy, unto which every penitent sinner may draw near. Round about this glorious throne, I see a rainbow, in sight like unto an emerald, which assures me, that thy covenant is everlasting. Though thy glory and majesty are increased, yet thy love for me, and thy tender compassions, are not diminished. Thou art the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Thou hast vouchsafed for my salvation, to lie in a manger, and to be nailed to a cross. Thou hast laid down thy life for my ransom, and hast shed thy precious blood to wash and cleanse me from my sins, and to mark me out the way to thine heavenly sanctuary. In the midst of all that glorious light wherewith thou art clothed, thou art not ashamed to acknowledge me thy brother (thy sister), and for a member of thy mystical body. It is for my sake that thou appearest before thy heavenly Father, and that thou offerest up prayers and supplications unto him. O adorable Lord! it is in thy power to give me the things which thou hast merited by thy sufferings, and which thou requestest for me by thy prayers and intercessions; for all power is given unto thee, in heaven and in earth. O Sovereign Monarch of the world! hast not thou made us this great and precious promise,—I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me? John xii. 32; and is it not for us that thou hast prayed in this transporting manner, Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me? John xvii. 24. Since, therefore, thou hast been lifted up from this miserable earth, to reign and triumph in heaven, draw my soul unto thee, O merciful Redeemer! and deliver it from this vale of tears and misery. Cause it to hear at the time of its departure these words of joy and eternal comfort, Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise, Luke xxiii. 43. Lord Jesus draw me with the cords of thy love and mercy, and I will run after thee. And seeing I must of necessity pass through death to come unto thee, the Prince of life and immortality, grant me thy grace, that I may look upon it in the same manner as the prophet Elijah did upon the fiery chariot that took him up

into heaven ; or as Jacob did upon the wagons that carried him into Egypt, where his son was governor over the land. This holy patriarch, in a transport of joy, cried out, Let me see my son Joseph, and then let me die ! but, ravishing with a joy unspeakable and full of glory, I will cry out in a different manner, Let me die, that I may behold my true Joseph, the soul of my soul, the light of my life, the author of all my glory and happiness ! O sweet Jesus ! grant that I may freely and willingly leave this wretched and infirm dwelling, to enter into thy celestial palace, and to behold the divine splendour of thine infinite Majesty. O King of Kings, and Lord of Lords ! when shall I hear that eternal wisdom that flows from thy lips? When shall I see thee seated upon the throne of thy glory, where thousand thousands minister unto thee, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before thee ? When shall I enter into the glorious company of the blessed saints, that sing forth thy praises, and cast at thy feet their precious crowns ? O victorious Monarch ! who art now in thy kingdom, crowned with perfect glory and happiness, forget not thy servant, be not unmindful of thy son (or daughter), who is poor and despised, overwhelmed with sorrow, and in the anguish of death. Let not the songs of the holy angels, and the praises of all the glorified spirits, hinder thee from listening to my sighs and groans. O Almighty and merciful Lord ! look upon me with an eye of love, and reach out unto me thy helping hand. Send to my assistance thine angels of light, to protect me from the angels of darkness, that endeavour to destroy me, and to drag me headlong into hell. Let those glorious spirits that fly at thy command, deliver me out of the paws of death, and bear me upon their wings to thy bosom. I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. *Amen.*

CHAPTER XIX.

The seventh Consolation against the Fears of Death, is, our strict and inseparable union with Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, and the first fruits of our blessed immortality.

Our Lord Jesus Christ not only lives and triumphs in heaven, but it is from him our life, our glory, and our blessed immortality proceed: For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will, John v. 21, 26; so that we may not only say unto him with St Peter, Thou hast the words of eternal life, John vi. 68, but also, with the royal prophet, With thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light, Psal. xxxvi. 9. Therefore, all those that are united to, and incorporated with this Prince of Life, partake of the fulness of the Holy Spirit, which is to him-ward, whereby they become happy and immortal. Now, by the goodness and mercy of God, we are not only made partakers of Christ's death and passion, but we are also united to, and incorporated with him; we not only have the great and precious promises of a glorious immortality, which he hath purchased for us, but we receive the first fruit, the foretaste of it.

The high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, revives the spirit of the humble, Isa. lvii. 15, and dwells in our hearts by faith, Eph. iii. 17. He sheds into our soul his holy and quickening Spirit, For because we are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying Abba, Father, Gal. iv. 6. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his, Rom. viii. 9. By the means of this Spirit, he dwells in us, and we in him; we become members of his body, and can boast, that we are of his flesh, and of his bones, Eph. v. 30.

All things, the most strictly united by nature or art, are made use of to represent to us this admirable union which we enjoy with Christ, by the means of his Spirit, that quickeneth us, John. vi. 63. Hence are derived these expressions

of the holy apostles, We have put on the Lord Jesus Christ, Rom. xiii. 14; Gal. iii. 27. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious, we also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5. For the same reason our Saviour tells us, that he is the true vine, and that we are the branches, John xv.; and St Paul assures us, that if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection, Rom. vi. 5.

To express to us, that the bond of this sacred union is love, our Lord Jesus Christ is represented as our brother, our father and our bridegroom. Accordingly, the apostle tells us, That he is not ashamed to call us brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, Heb. ii. 11, 12; and elsewhere, That God hath predestinated us to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren, Rom. viii. 29; and after his resurrection, our Lord himself speaks thus to Mary Magdalen, Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God, John. xx. 17. Likewise, this glorious Redeemer, showing himself unto God with all the elect, saith, Behold, I, and the children which thou hast given me, Heb. ii. 13; and speaking to his church by the mouth of the prophet Hosea, he makes her this promise, I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies, chap. ii. 19. Hence the church is often called in the Revelations, the Bride, the Lamb's Wife; and in the Canticles, the spiritual union betwixt Christ and his church is all along represented by the allegory of a marriage.

And because the meat and drink which we take for our nourishment, unites with the body in such a manner as to become one substance with it, Jesus Christ assures us, That his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed; that he is the true bread which came down from heaven, which giveth life unto the world; and that if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever, John vi.

But, among all the similitudes employed to represent to us our union with Jesus Christ, by his Holy Spirit that quickeneth us, there is none more frequently made use of in Holy Scripture, than that of the human body; nor indeed is there any more proper: for as all the spirits that give life and motion to the body proceed from the head, and the

members die as soon as separated from it; in like manner, the Spirit that quickeneth us, and maketh us become new creatures, proceeds from Jesus Christ; so that every one that separates himself from this head, falls into death and eternal destruction. And as there are many members, which, nevertheless, make up but one body, because they are all animated with the same Spirit, and are kept alive by the same head; so there are many members belonging to Christ's mystical body, some fighting the good fight upon earth, and others glorified in heaven; nevertheless, they make up only one mystical and spiritual body, forasmuch as they are all quickened by the same Spirit, and receive their celestial influences from the same head. This is what St Paul expressly teacheth us in these divine words, For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit, 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13. Finally, because the same Spirit that is in our Lord, as in the head and fountain, and in the church in general, as in the body quickened and moved, is also in every member. The holy apostle is not satisfied with calling by the name of Christ, this precious body, composed of Christ and his church, but he tells us, moreover, with respect to every believer in particular, But he that is joined unto the Lord, is one spirit, 1 Cor. vi. 17.

These, and all other representations of the same nature, however lively and noble they may appear, are but dark shadows and imperfect images of our union with Jesus Christ by his Holy Spirit that quickeneth us. For the richest and most magnificent garments cannot keep off diseases, nor hinder the corruption of the body which they invest. There is no foundation, though ever so firm and well settled, that can secure the house built upon it from the breaches of time. Although the sap mounts up from the root of the vine, and circulates into the twigs and branches, they wither at last, and are cast into the fire. The rarest meats, and the most exquisite drinks, cannot make our bodies immortal. Death snatches, every day, the brother from the brother, the father from the child, and the wife from the husband. A stroke of the sword can separate the head from the healthiest and most vigorous body; nay, without any such violence, the head dies as well as the body; and the spirits that proceed from it are so far from hindering the corruption of the mem-

bers, that they corrupt of themselves and disappear. In short, the strictest unions of nature and art are dissolved by time; and every thing under the sun is subject to vanity and inconstancy, Eccl. i. But the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ is the principle of an eternal life, the seed of an incorruptible glory; whosoever is united to him by this Spirit, nothing can separate him from Christ, neither life, nor death, nor the world, nor hell, nor things present, nor things to come, Rom. viii. 38. Therefore, when our blessed Saviour could find nothing upon earth, nor amongst all the creatures, worthy and able to represent this perfect and inseparable union, he seeks an image above the highest heavens, in that unchangeable union, which was, which is, and which ever shall be, between him and God the Father; as we may see in his excellent prayer, John xvii. Father, I pray for them which shall believe on me: that they may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us, even as we are one.

Tremble not, therefore, Christian souls, nor be dismayed; for all the three persons of the most holy, most glorious, and most adorable Trinity, are engaged for your salvation and eternal happiness. The Father, by his infinite wisdom, hath found out a means to reconcile us to himself, to satisfy the rigour of his justice, and to declare the riches of his unparalleled mercies; the Son hath purchased for us this great salvation, by offering himself up a willing sacrifice upon the cross, and by shedding his most precious blood for the remission of our sins; and the Holy Spirit, by uniting us with this our High Priest, makes us partakers of the infinite merits of his sufferings. This is the true hyssop that sprinkles the divine blood of the Lamb, without spot or blemish, to the cleansing of our souls, Heb. xii. 24. It is this Spirit that gives us the white stone, wherein the new name of *elect* and *believer* is written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it, Rev. ii. 17. He gives us to eat of the hidden manna, the food of angels, which the world knoweth not, John xiv. 17. It is instead of a precious ring, by which our heavenly Bridegroom plights to us his conjugal faith. It is the seal of the living God, that seals to us the covenant of grace, and all the promises of glory and happiness, made to us in the gospel; as the apostle tells us, Having believed in the gospel of our salvation, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, Eph. i. 13; therefore he exhorts us, Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption, Eph. iv. 30. Finally, this is

the Spirit that beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God : and if children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, Rom. viii. 16, 17.

Think not, Christian souls, that I intend to persuade you, that this Holy Spirit of our Lord Jesus shall come and whisper in your ear, or call unto you from within that you are the children of God, as some extravagant enthusiasts imagine. The witness that he bears with our spirits is a real and effectual witness, if I may say so ; for by regenerating us, and making us become new creatures, he gives us a greater and more certain assurance of our adoption, than if he declared from heaven, Thou art my child, and thy name is written in the book of life. As the seal imprints its image in the wax, thus the Spirit of our Lord Jesus imprints in our souls the image of its holiness, and all its divine virtues. Now, as the figure that remains upon the wax enables us to pass a sure judgment, what manner of seal made the impression ; so when you find the image of God engraved in your hearts, acknowledge the finger of God, and the power of his Holy Spirit ; for no one can bear this blessed image, except he be the child of God. The Holy Spirit, that engraves it in our souls, kindles there the flames of seraphic love, and gives us tongues of fire. He causes us to speak to God with boldness, as unto our Father ; and to lift up our eyes to heaven with a holy joy ; as unto our inheritance.

All the possessions of this life are subject to innumerable accidents, and we are sure to lose them at last. *Riches make themselves wings, they fly away as an eagle towards heaven,* Prov. xxiii. 5 : honours vanish like smoke that is driven by the wind : and pleasures haste away as a torrent ; or, like rivers of the sweetest water, they end at last in a sea of bitterness. But if, by chance, these vanities continue with the worldlings so long as they live, yet when they die, they shall carry nothing away ; their glory shall not descend after them, Psal. xlix. 17, and their foolish delight shall vanish with their breath. But death has no power over this spirit of life, which is our true treasure and glory, and our only constant delight.

Nay, even that true and lively faith, that embraceth Jesus Christ as its Saviour, shall cease ; and hope, that looketh at things to come, shall one day be abolished. While we are in this earthly pilgrimage, we walk by faith, not by sight, 2 Cor. v. 7 ; and while we are tossed up and down upon the troubled sea of this world, we have need of the anchor of our hope, and to wait with patience the fulfilling of what we

hope for. But when we shall arrive at our heavenly country, we shall neither need staff to support us, nor shield to defend us, against the fiery darts of the devil. When we shall enter into the haven of eternity, this anchor will no longer be of use to us; for our hope shall be changed into a perfect fruition. When we shall be in paradise, we shall not need wings to carry us up to God, but only to fly about his throne, as the seraphims, Isa. vi. In short, we shall not want a glass to behold his glory, for we shall see him face to face, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. All that we believe at present, without seeing, we shall then see and believe no more. But as for the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, John xiv. 17, it is not given us for a time, but to dwell in us for ever. As the humanity which our Lord Jesus took from among us is not cast off, nor ever will be; thus the spirit which he hath given us shall never be taken from us. The humanity which our blessed Saviour united personally to the godhead, is become glorious by that eternal union; but the Spirit which he hath united to our spirits, by this union of grace, is the source of all our glory and happiness.

This Spirit of life is not only the seal of the promises of God, but also an earnest of that incorruptible inheritance reserved in heaven for us, 1 Pet. i. 4. This St Paul teacheth us in the first chapter of his epistle to the Ephesians: for after having said, Ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, (he adds), which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. This Holy Spirit being the seal of the living God, makes him the earnest of our inheritance: for that heavenly image which he imprints in our souls, shall be part of the glory with which we shall be crowned in paradise. Therefore the wisdom of God, that manifests itself in every thing, calls not this spirit a pledge, but an earnest; for though both the one and the other is given to insure the fulfilling of promises, yet there is this difference between them, that men commonly take back again the thing pledged, when that which was promised is performed; but the earnest always remains, and is part of the sum to be paid. As therefore the earnest which is given is never taken away, but men add to it the remainder of the sum promised; thus our Saviour never takes away from his elect the spirit of adoption, which he hath once bestowed upon them: but he increaseth its graces and advantages, until he hath raised them

to the highest glory, and most divine happiness, that they can hope or expect.

It is in this case as with the sun, which as soon as it appears above the horizon, increaseth its splendour more and more, until it ascends up to the meridian; or, as with the brooks and rivers, which the farther they run, the fuller they grow, until they come to the sea. Therefore our Lord and Saviour, speaking of this Spirit of grace, which such as believe in him receive, tells the Jews, He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water, John vii. 38: and to the woman of Samaria he saith, Whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life, John iv. 14. This was sometime shown in a vision to the prophet Ezekiel, under the image of waters that ran down from the sanctuary; for at first they reached no higher than the prophet's ancles; afterwards they rose up to his knees, and then to his loins; and at last they increased in such a manner, that they became a great torrent, a deep river which could not be passed, and which ran into the sea, chap. xlvii.

As David, in the beginning of his royalty, ruled over no more than one tribe, but afterwards enlarged the borders of his kingdoms, and reigned over all the twelve tribes of Israel, so that the small portion of the kingdom which he at first possessed was not taken from him, but increased, and made greater, 2 Sam. ii.; thus it is with us even in this life; we have a small part of the kingdom of heaven entrusted in our hands; or, if I may so say, we have now some jewels of that incorruptible crown which is promised hereafter. This part shall not be taken from us; this bright beam of our future glory shall never be extinguished; but in the life to come, we shall possess, as far as we are able, the whole extent of this kingdom, and shall be clothed with all the light and splendour of the heavenly glory.

But as there is no comparison so exactly just, but what is deficient in some respects; so here is a notable difference: for the tribe of Judah was the noblest and richest part of the kingdom of David; but that part which our souls enjoy at present, of the happiness and glory of the kingdom of heaven, is but a drop of water in comparison of the ocean, or as a weak ray of light, when compared with the sun. Therefore the apostle St Paul, who had been caught up to the third heaven, 2 Cor. xii. 2, and who knew better than any man in the world what were the joys and glories of that place, when

he speaks of this Spirit of adoption which God sends into our hearts, calls it the first fruits of the Spirit, Rom. viii. 23; to teach us, that there is as great a difference between the measure of the gifts and graces which we received here below, and the overflowing abundance that we shall receive in heaven, as between a few ears of corn and the entire harvest of a field. It is like the cluster of grapes which was brought to the children of Israel in the wilderness, when compared to those innumerable quantites, with which the land of Canaan abounded. It is only some small crumbs of that heavenly bread with which we shall be satisfied in the kingdom of God; or, as it were, a few drops of that new wine which we shall drink for ever in the heavenly Jerusalem.

By this time you perceive, believing souls, that the approaches of death ought not to affright you, since you have within yourselves the principles of everlasting life, and the seeds of a glorious immortality, which cannot be taken from you. Jesus Christ not only waits for you at the haven, and stretches out his arms to receive you into his rest, but he himself is also with you, and will render the way more easy and pleasant to this new world, where righteousness dwells. He will work miracles for your sakes; and if you believe, you shall see the glory of God, John xi. 40. We not only tread in the footsteps of this our true and heavenly Joshua, but we pass over with him, and he passeth over with us. We are not like the children of Israel that passed over Jordan, whilst the priest stood with the ark in the midst of the river, Josh. iii. 17. But we may be compared to those priests themselves that bear the ark of the covenant, and caused the waters to return back to their place: for we are a royal priesthood, 1 Pet. ii. 9, and bear in our souls the Lord Jesus, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead bodily, Col. ii. 9, and in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, ver. 3. In short, our souls return to God, the fountain from whence they came. Let, therefore, that heavenly voice which was heard in the holy land sound continually in your hearts, Fear not, for I have redeemed thee: I am thy God and thy Saviour. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee, Isa. xliii. 1, 2; and say, with the man after God's own heart, Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of

death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me, Psal. xxiii. 4.

It seems the primitive Christians had a design to paint to us this truth, by the emblematical figure of a giant-like man, wading through the sea with a staff in his hand, and a child upon his shoulder. For this giant is the emblem of a Christian, who lifts up his hopes as high as heaven; the sea signifies the dangers of this world, and the terrors of death; the staff represents faith, that supports us in our passage through death to life, leaning upon which we worship the living God, that made heaven and earth: and the child is an image of Christ; therefore he that bears him is called Christopherus; that is to say, he that bears Christ.

If Cæsar could not endure to see his pilot tremble in a furious tempest at sea, because he was in the boat, how much less reason have we to be afraid, who carry in our hearts the great Emperor of the world, the hope and consolation of Israel! Cæsar was as much in danger to suffer shipwreck as his pilot; but our Lord Jesus Christ hath all the winds at his command. He can still the most troubled sea; and by the most terrible death, he can bring us safe to the haven of eternal rest, to a most happy and glorious life!

When David addressed himself to fight with Goliah, he spoke thus to that dreadful Philistine, I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, 1 Sam. xvii. 45. But you, Christians, when you are to encounter with death, may say to it, not only, I come to thee in the name of him who hath legions of angels at his service, who commands all the armies of heaven; but I come to thee clothed with his armour, strengthened by his Holy Spirit, and assisted by himself in person. For Jesus Christ, who hath overcome death for us, will also overcome it by us. We are the lively stones (1 Peter ii. 5) which he hath chosen of his wonderful grace and mercy, to bring down and subdue, once more, this proud insulting enemy, which makes all that live in the world to tremble, and covers their faces with shame and confusion.

We have seen a Sampson, breaking in pieces, with an admirable strength, the ropes with which he had been bound by the Philistines, and rending a young lion, in whose carcase, a few days after, he found honey, which was most pleasant to the taste, Judges xiv. and xvi. With much more ease shall we, who are strenthened with the spirit of the Lord Jesus, of whom Sampson was but a type, break in pieces all the cords and chains of death. We shall rend the body

of this old lion, and when we shall have searched into his bowels with a serious and frequent meditation, we shall find there the sweetest and most ravishing comforts.

As when the prophet Elijah was taken up into heaven in a chariot of fire, he let fall his mantle, with which Elisha divided the waters of Jordan, so that he went over on dry ground, 2 Kings ii.; thus our Saviour Jesus Christ being ascended up above the clouds, to the throne of his glory, hath covered us with the robe of his righteousness, Isa. lxi. 10, and hath strengthened us with his Holy Spirit, that we might pass in safety through the turbulent sea of this world, and that through death we might enter into life immortal.

And as the death of our Lord Jesus Christ separated his soul from his body, although his holy and innocent soul, his pure and immaculate body, remained always united personally to his divinity; in the same manner, the believer's death divides for a time his soul from his body, but it can never separate it from the spirit of the Lord Jesus, which is the soul of our souls, such a divine and immortal flame, as can never be extinguished.

When the high priest of the Jews put off his priestly ornaments, he at the same time put off his breast-plate, whereon the names of the twelve tribes of Israel were engraved, Exod. xxviii. 21. Now, not only our names are written in the Lamb's book of life, Rev. xiii.; and our picture imprinted upon the palms of his hands with the blood of the everlasting covenant, but we are as a seal upon his heart, Cant. viii. 6; so that we cannot be separated from him, any more than his heart can be taken from him. His love is stronger than death; the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.

Whereas, then, Ruth the Moabitess, said unto Naomi her mother-in-law, Nought but death shall part thee and me, Ruth i. 17; we can say unto our Lord and Saviour, who is our father, brother, and husband, not only death shall never be able to separate us from thee, but it shall bring us nearer to thee, and cause us to rest in thy bosom, where we shall be for ever satisfied with the delights of thy paradise.

Therefore, believing souls, be no longer afraid of death, seeing you are invulnerable to all its darts, having been dipt all over in the river that springs up to eternal life. The spirit of the Lord Jesus that is in you, is the spirit of life, the seed of immortality, and the only fountain of glory and happiness. If the breath of the prophet Elijah raised a dead body to life, 1 Kings xvii. 22, how much more shall the spirit and breath of the Father and the Son be able to pre-

serve your spiritual life? Had death the power to stop the breath of the Almighty, to extinguish the rays that flow from his divine countenance, and to dry up the rivers of living waters that issue out of his throne, it might then be able to destroy you, or to make you miserable; but so long as Jesus Christ shall be the author and well-spring of light, life, glory and immortality, and his Holy Spirit shall be victorious and triumphant over death and hell, you may assure yourselves of being everlastingly happy, and may sing with the Psalmist, I shall not die but live, and declare the works of the Lord, Psal. cxviii. 17.

You are not only certain of this everlasting glory and happiness; you are not only entered into possession of it by your faith and hope, but you begin already to enjoy it and its first-fruits; for he that believeth on Jesus Christ is passed from death unto life, John v. 24. He that hath the Son of God, hath eternal life, 1 John v. 12. As the prophet Moses, when he was in the wilderness, not only saw the land of Canaan afar off, but tasted of its fruits; thus we not only behold afar off, with the eye of faith, our celestial inheritance, but we taste at present, and relish some of its sacred delights. And as the fruits brought by the spies were of the same kind with those that the children of Israel fed upon in the promised land; in like manner, the fruits which we taste in this world, are to us no other than a wilderness, are fruits of the tree of life, with which we shall be fully satisfied in heaven. For the grace that God bestows upon us here below, by his Holy Spirit, is the beginning of that glory wherewith he shall crown us above. The same light that shines upon our souls on earth, shall enlighten them for ever in heaven: but whereas at present, we look upon it through a mist darkly, we shall then behold it clearly, without any veil or obscurity. The same holiness that adorns at present our souls, shall still be their ornament and glory; only then it shall appear without spot or blemish. That same peace of conscience that is now the joy of our hearts, the delight of our senses, shall still remain with us; but then it shall not suffer the least interruption. In short, the same Jesus that is conceived in our hearts, and that is formed and grows up in us by degrees, shall appear in a perfect stature, which shall want no increase.

As it is with the sea; it runs into the rivers before the rivers can run into the sea: in like manner, God comes to us before we go to him; and heaven enters into our souls before we can enter into heaven.

Aged Simeon waited patiently for death; but as soon as he had seen the Saviour of the world, and embraced him, he ran joyfully to meet it; he thought upon nothing but his final departure, and prayed unto God, with a holy earnestness, to receive him unto his glorious rest. What then ought to be the frame and disposition of thy soul, O Christian, since thou beholdest with the eyes of faith this blessed Redeemer, not wrapt up in swaddling-clothes, but clothed with light, and crowned with glory. He is not in thine arms, but in thine heart: thou hast not received him to part with him again presently, but to be united to him for ever, and to be incorporated into his mystical body. Since, therefore, death brings thee nearer to thy Redeemer, perfects this blessed union, and casts thee into the very fountain of life, instead of being seized with fear, and troubled at its approach, it is then thou shouldst rejoice and be transported with raptures of divine gladness. We should meet death with a cheerful countenance, or rather the Lord Jesus, the Prince of mercy and life, who having vouchsafed thee a sight of his salvation, graciously intends to take thee into his rest, and to receive thee into that glorious peace which reigns above in heaven.

XXIV.

Prayer and Meditation for a Christian Soul, which strengthens itself against the Fears of Death, by meditating upon our strict and inseparable union with Jesus Christ by his Holy Spirit, and upon the first fruits of our blessed immortality.

O Almighty and merciful Lord! the Son of Righteousness, and Fountain of living waters! Drive away from me the dark shadows of death, and quench all the fires that it kindles in my soul. Thou hast not only died for me, but thou art pleased to live in me, to the end I may one day live for ever with thee. Thou hast not only chosen me, of thy pure mercy, to be thy brother (thy sister), and thy child, but thou hast made me a member of thy mystical body, flesh of thy flesh, bone of thy bone, and hast caused me to partake of thy Holy Spirit. God hath given thee the spirit without measure, that of thy fulness we might all receive, and grace for grace, John i. 16. By the means of this blessed and infinite Spirit that dwells in my soul, I am united to thee in

a nearer and more perfect manner, than the tree is to the root from which it springs, or the child to its mother that nourisheth it in her womb, or the members of the human body are to the head that animates them. The ties that unite me unto thee, O glorious Saviour! are more lasting than the heavens and earth. As nothing can pluck me out of thy hand, so nothing can banish me out of thy heart. Whether I live or die, I am thine, my Lord and my God, and nothing can separate me from thy love. Death can take me out of the world, and snatch me from the embraces of my dearest friends; but it can never separate me from thy Holy Spirit, the soul of my soul, and the light of my life, which cannot be put out by all the envious blasts of the prince of darkness; on the contrary, it will bring me nearer to behold thy face, to rest in thy bosom, and will unite me with thee for ever. Lord, to whom shall I go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. Thou art the inexhaustible Fountain of wisdom, my hope, my treasure, my glory and mine only happiness. O faithful and unexceptionable witness! I should be worse than an infidel, should I call in question my salvation and thy glory, since the Father hath not spared thee for me, though thou art his only beloved Son, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person. Since thou, O merciful Redeemer! hast willingly suffered a shameful death upon the cross, and shed thy precious blood to wash away my sins, and satisfy for my offences, and since thy Holy Spirit is come into my heart, to sprinkle it with that precious blood, and to seal me for the day of redemption. O glorious spirit of my Saviour, that rests upon me, although thou shouldst enable me to speak with the tongue of angels, I could not sufficiently express the wonderful operations that thou producest in my soul. Thou kindlest there a holy fire, which like that of thy altar, never dies. Thou formest in me a white stone, wherein is a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it. Thou givest me to eat of that hidden manna, that food of angels, which the world knoweth not. Thou bearest witness with my spirit, that I am a child and heir of God, and joint heir with Jesus Christ the King of Kings: and thou not only sealest unto me the pardon of my sins, but thou purgest my conscience from dead works to serve the living God, Heb. ix. 14. Thou not only causest me to cry Abba, Father, but imprintest in my heart the glorious image of this heavenly Father. Thou art both the seal of my adoption, and the earnest of mine incorruptible inheritance, prepared for me in heaven. Thou hast not only given me certain

hopes of a glorious and eternal life, but thou hast already begun it in my soul, granting me a foretaste of it. Thou both causest me to behold the light of thy grace, and makest it enlighten my understanding. Thou not only vouchsafest me the favour of beholding from this valley of tears thine heavenly kingdom, but givest me to taste of its fruits. I am not yet come to the fountains of water springing up into everlasting life, but I taste the streams and rivers that flow through my heart. I am not yet in thy holy paradise, but thou hast caused paradise to be in me. Thou hast filled me with a joy unspeakable and full of glory, and hast bestowed upon me the peace of God that passeth all understanding. O living and quickening Spirit, which the world knoweth not! thou strengthenest me in such a manner, that death shall no longer be able to make me afraid. Thou hast united me for ever to the Prince of Life, and art in me a seed of immortality, a principle of glory, and an inexhaustible source of happiness. Thou art in me to dwell with me for ever; therefore thou shalt fill up in me the measure of thy most signal favours. My faith, borne upon thy wings, hath got a sight of the kingdom prepared for me from the foundation of the world; but shortly I shall see with mine eyes the inexpressible beauties of that celestial country, that flows with the milk of the purest and sincerest joys, and with the honey of the sweetest and most exalted consolations. Thou hast given me a foretaste of the fruits of the tree of life; but when I come into thy paradise, I shall be for ever filled with its delicious fruits. Thou hast already caused some drops of thy heavenly dew to fall upon my heart; but then thou wilt make me drink of the rivers of thy immortal delights. At present, in my painful passage, in the midst of my groans and tears, I gather a few ears; but when I come to my celestial inheritance, I shall reap my hands full with songs of triumph. Here upon earth I see God, as in a glass, darkly; but in heaven I shall behold him face to face, and shall be satisfied with his likeness. My Lord and my God! who by the infinite merits of thy death hast purchased for us this spirit of life, and hast set upon my soul such an authentic seal of my salvation, such a precious earnest of thine eternal bliss, I feel in me the motions and endeavours of this new man that struggles to leave this body of darkness and death, to enter into the light of the living. Lord Jesus! since thou hast made me a partaker of thy Holy Spirit, enlightened me with thy heavenly light, caused me to know the way of life, and hast given me to taste of the heavenly gift, and of the powers of

the life to come; since thou hast vouchsafed to me the first fruits of thy glory, and I already feel heaven in my soul; since I behold thee with the eyes of my faith, embrace thee with all my affections, and that thou dwellest in my heart, perfect in me the work of thy grace, and crown me with thy glory. Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation. *Amen.*

CHAPTER XX.

The eighth Consolation. Death delivers us from all the Miseries which we daily suffer.

THERE are certain pictures with two faces; the one side represents most frightful and hideous objects, the other the most beautiful and pleasing that can be imagined. This is the true image of death; and in this manner it ought to be painted. For we may consider it as a skeleton with a fearful countenance and iron hands, that ravish from us our possessions and honours, tear us from ourselves, and drag our bodies into a loathsome sepulchre. If we look upon death in this view, we cannot but tremble and fear. But we may also look upon it as a powerful deliverer, that unlooses all our fetters, breaks our chains, and lifts up our souls to the highest glory and happiness. If we consider it in this light, there is nothing more lovely than death, nothing more worthy our admiration.

I have hitherto endeavoured to show how a believer shall fortify and comfort himself against the fears of death: but now my pen attempts a nobler theme, and with the assistance of heaven, I shall undertake to prove, not only that death is to be expected without apprehension, but that it is to be embraced with a holy joy; that is, to be desired, not feared. To speak properly, I shall offer no more consolations against the fears of death; for I hope to make it appear, that death itself is to be looked upon as the greatest of all consolations.

To attain my purpose, I shall give you a picture in miniature, of all the dreadful miseries and misfortunes from which death delivers us; and then I shall endeavour to paint in

lively colours, or rather, I shall faintly chalk out to you, the blessedness and glory into which it ushers us.

Man's life and misery are twin-sisters. They are born at the same time in all the children of Adam; they also die together at the same instant, in true believers. Man begins his life weeping and crying, and ends it with sighs and groans. We come into the world all covered with blood, and we go out of it covered with the cold sweat of death. If a child cries not as soon as it is born, we judge it to be dead; and when a sick person ceases to groan and complain, we say that he is departing. So that our crying is a token of life, and the end of our groans an infallible sign of our death. Wretched man! How miserable is thy condition! Thy best friends rejoice at thy crying, and they weep when thou ceasest to sigh and lament.

All the rest of our time, between the cradle and the grave, is no happier; it is but a continued chain of misery, a mixture of different pains, a succession of evils, and a sea of bitterness. As one wave pushes on another, so one evil is no sooner gone but another follows and threatens us. Deep calleth unto deep, and all manner of waves and billows pass over us continually, Psal. xlii. 7. Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upwards, Job v. 7; and as the wisest of kings tells us, All his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night, Eccl. ii. 23. There are no houses but where the messengers of ill news often meet together, as at that of Job, chap. i.

By God's unchangeable appointment, the days succeed the nights, and divide the year into two equal parts: for if the nights are longer in one season, they are so much the shorter in another. But the nights of our afflictions are so long, that they seem to endure whole ages; whereas, the days of our prosperity are so very short, that they pass away in a moment; so that we have reason to say with the prophet Moses, Our strength is labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away, Psal. xc. 10.

It would be as easy a task to number the stars in the firmament, or to count all the grains of sand upon the sea-shore, as to enumerate exactly all the evils that befall us, either as men belonging to a civil society, or as members of God's church, and his adopted children. The partriarch Jacob complained, that the days of the years of his life had been few and evil, Gen. xlvii. 9; but ours are so evil, that they cannot be too few.

I should compose many volumes, if I should undertake to

describe particularly all the infirmities and diseases that undermine the body; all the sharp pains, the cruel agonies that rack and torment it.

But the most languishing sicknesses, the most acute pains that afflict and disturb the body, are nothing in comparison of that extreme sadness, that mortal anguish, that seizes upon the mind, and fills it full of gall and bitterness. I believe there is no man upon earth that can boast of having passed a single day without some displeasure, either visible or concealed; for we either feel present evils, that strike through our hearts as so many daggers, or the remembrance of former griefs trouble us, or else the fears of future mischiefs vex and consume us. I may justly say, that the devil himself is not so cruel to his own person as we are to ours; for this wicked spirit cares not to be tormented before the time, Matt. viii. 29; whereas we anticipate our evils by unquiet apprehensions and wilful vexations, that they prey upon the mind. The fear of misery makes us doubly miserable, and the apprehension of imaginary evils cause us to feel a real affliction and undissembled pain.

When we consider any man's life, we only look at that part of it which affects us with admiration and delight; we consider the nobility of his birth, the variety of his pleasures, the multitude of his riches, the lustre of his honours, the glory of his victories, and the pomp of his triumphs; but scarce any person takes notice of his miseries and afflictions, or if some are observed, they are only such as are obvious to every one's eye, as public disgraces, the loss of a battle, the degradation from an office, banishments, imprisonments, and such like accidents. But besides these calamities, which are visible to all the world, and the common motives of the condolement of our friends, there are many secret evils that are far more painful: our dearest friends discover not always our most sensible wounds, to pour into them their healing balm; they see not our deepest sorrows, much less do they think of applying to them the needful consolations.

When you behold players strutting upon the stage, and hear them speaking in the persons of kings and princes, you little think, that under their magnificent and costly attire, they hide many filthy rags, and sometimes vermin that sting them to the quick. Thus when you cast your eyes upon the riches, glory, pomp and magnificence of worldly men, you discover not the canker that gnaws their hearts, the secret fire that devours them. Some there are that laugh before company, and put on a merry countenance, who, in private,

are full of despair, sigh, rend their hair, and pour forth tears of blood. Some feed themselves before the world with the most delicious meats, and drink the noblest wines, but inwardly their meat is poison, and their drink gall. This was the consideration of the wisest of kings, when he cried, I said of laughter, it is mad: and of mirth, what doeth it? Eccl. ii. 2.

As poverty and a mean estate are never without sorrow and care, so riches and honours are never without fear and inquietude; and as there is no flame so pure, but what emits some smoke, no rose so beautiful but has its prickles, so there is no condition so splendid and glorious, no prosperity so flourishing, but hath its troubles and sharp uneasinesses. Every man upon earth (without exception) bears his cross, or, in other words, hath a thorn in his flesh. The moth sticks to the richest stuffs, the worm gets into the heart of the fairest flowers and fruits, and the thunderbolt beats down the loftiest oaks, the highest steeples, and the proudest palaces. Thus care and grief eat up the flower of the greatest prosperity, and the noblest dignities are subjected to the most terrible downfalls. The richest crowns cast all their splendour and glory outwardly, but inwardly they weigh heavy upon the heads of such as wear them. A great prince found his so insupportable, that he cried out, O crown! if thy weight was known, none would lift thee from the ground. It is not without cause, that such as are passionately fond of the world, and suffer themselves to be carried away by carnal delights, are in perpetual fear, for they are exposed to the most imminent danger. If their eyes were open, they would see a naked sword always hanging over their heads by a single hair. As in that image which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream, the head that was of fine gold, was as easily broken as the feet that were of clay, and became as the chaff which the wind carrieth away, Dan. ii. 35; so the most honourable, the richest, and the most glorious estate, is subject to the same accidents as the lowest, the poorest, and the most wretched. Where are the riches and treasures that are not in danger of poverty? Where rides that pride that carries not shame behind it? Is there any grandeur in the world secure against the blasts of envy? Is there any taper which a sudden rain cannot extinguish? Christian souls, take notice of the fruits which the world gives to its servants and children, and you shall find that they are like certain apples of America, of an excellent beauty, and a delicious smell, but within full of rank poison, that infallibly kills

such as unadvisedly eat of them. There is no sweet so great upon earth but hath a mixture of bitterness ; no joy so pure and lasting, but is often interrupted by sighs and fears. The most exquisite pleasures have an air of grief, and a groaning accent. Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness, Prov. xiv. 13; therefore the wisest of princes, after he had considered with attention all things that pass in the world, and had tasted all the delights of life, concludes with this confession, I have seen all the works that are done under the sun, and behold all is vanity and vexation of spirit. Vanity of vanities, all is vanity, Eccl. i. 2, 14.

It is not needful that I should enter here into a particular detail of all the sad and calamitous accidents to which a man is subject in this life, and which are able to overturn his most prosperous and flourishing estate. Whoever thou art that readest this, revolve carefully in thy mind the whole course of thy life, and weigh in the balance of the sanctuary, all the good and evil which thou hast experienced. In one scale put all the advantages of the flesh, and whatsoever brings thee any pleasure or content, and in the other all thy cares, griefs, disappointments and disgraces. If thy evils and miseries weigh not down the balance, esteem it a prodigy, a kind of miracle, yet boast not nevertheless. Remember what one of the seven wise men of Greece said to a haughty prince, who was dazzled with the glory of his empire, and made drunk with prosperities, That no one can be called happy before the hour of his death. Remember, that some who had attained to a greater degree of happiness than thou hast, have fallen into a most wretched state on a sudden. He who lately abounded in wealth and plenty, is reduced to the most abject poverty ; he who had whole armies at his command, is forsaken of all the world ; and he who had princes for his vassals, is forced to obey a slave. Some that fed daintily, are glad to eat the bread of affliction, and to quench their thirst with tears. Some who lately flourished in palaces, adorned with gold and azure, are now rotting in a loathsome dungeon. Some are dragged from their magnificent dwellings to the most infamous death. The richest and noblest crowns have not protected the most august heads.

But, supposing it possible that thou shouldst pass through this life, without feeling any alteration in thine health, without suffering any loss of thy goods or change of thy happy condition, a greater rarity than the strange bird called the Phœnix; hast thou no children, relations or friends, whom

thou tenderly lovest, and whom thou art bound in duty to love? Are these persons without afflictions? Are they not every day liable to them? Certainly, unless thou hast a heart as insensible as marble or steel, unless thou hast laid aside all natural affections, thou must needs have a quick feeling of all the evils and disgraces that happen to them in this life, and when death snatches them away, it rends thy heart, and tears out thy very bowels.

Nay, should it happen (which is impossible to imagine) that nothing afflicts thee either in thine own person, or in thy dearer part, thy relations and friends, and that all such as share thy affections, enjoy a perfect and flourishing prosperity, like those countries of the new world, which are always covered with flowers and fruits; yet cast thine eyes upon the face of the earth, and thou shalt there behold so many evils and calamities, that if thou hast any sense of humanity, thou must dissolve into tears.

God commanded the prophet Jeremiah to take the cup of his fury to several nations, one after another, Jer. xxv. But now it should seem that he gives this cup to them all at once; for where is that people or nation that can boast of never having drank of it, or of not being in danger to drink? Some have drank it up to the very dregs, others have taken large draughts, and some have its bitterness still upon their lips.

Our Saviour caused his beloved disciple to see two angels, who had each of them in his hand a sharp sickle, to reap the harvest, and to gather the grapes, Rev. xiv.; afterwards he showed to him seven more, who had in their hands golden vials full of the wrath of God, which they poured upon the earth to plague and punish the inhabitants thereof, Rev. xv. But at present, the holy angels seem to appear in legions to reap and gather mankind, and to transport them to the threshing-floor and wine-press of God's awakened vengeance. The wrath of God seems no longer to be measured out by vials or cups, but it overflows as a great river, as an unfathomable sea. In short, the deluge of evils that covers the face of the earth, is so universal, that the doves, I mean the innocent and meek, that love peace, can find no rest for the soles of their feet.

If thou hast any sense of humanity, the least spark of Christian zeal and charity, thou canst not behold, without a very great sorrow, the deplorable state of Christ's church upon earth; for it is like Noah's ark in the midst of the waters, like the bush on Mount Horeb surrounded with

flames ; like the prophet Daniel in the lion's den, and like his companions in the fiery furnace ; so that it may justly cry out with the ancient Jerusalem, It is nothing to you, all ye that pass by ? behold and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger ! Lam. i. 12. O blessed church of God, thou hast been persecuted from thine infancy until now ! Prepare, therefore, thyself to suffer much more in this old age of the world. The devil persecutes thee with so much the more wrath and fury, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time, Rev. xii. 12; and that he must soon be shut up in the bottomless pit.

In this case to mourn is not only lawful, but commanded ; for God calls to girding with sackcloth, Isa. xxii. 12. He would have us grieve for the affliction of Joseph, Amos vi. 6; to weep with them that weep, Rom. xii. 15 ; and to remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them ; and them which suffer adversity, as being ourselves also in the body, Heb. xiii. 3.

We have too much reason to apply to the world, and to the worldlings, David's exclamation, Wo is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar. My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace, Psal. cxx. 5, 6. The prophet Jeremiah had never so much cause to lament, and to wish that his head were waters, and his eyes a fountain of tears, that he might weep day and night, Jer. ix. 1 ; and the prophet Isaiah had never so much reason to cry out, in the agony of his soul, Look away from me, I will weep bitterly, labour not to comfort me ; because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people, chap. xxii. 4.

It is not therefore, without cause, that the preacher tells us, That the day of death is better than the day of one's birth, Eccl. vii. 1 ; for our birth causest us to weep, and death dries all our tears ; our birth discovers to us a large theatre, upon which all kinds of tragedies are acted, death draws the curtain, and puts an end to all such bloody spectacles ; our birth casts us into the fire and bitter waters of divers afflictions, and death pulls us out of that fire and bitterness. Finally, since our life is but a chain of misery, and that death breaks in pieces the last links ; since life is a continual warfare, and death the victory ; it is most certain, that death is not to be feared as an evil or misfortune, but rather to be desired as a blessing and advantage.

It is recorded of the Thracians, that they buried their dead with expressions of joy ; and the inhabitants of Fortunate Is-

land sang and danced at the funerals of their dearest friends. I shall not make any observations on the extravagant customs of these barbarous people, who were without hope and without God in the world. Such cannot fear death too much; for if it frees them from a few temporary evils, it casts them headlong into an abyss of endless torment. Death is a happiness, and brings with it a solid joy and comfort; but it is when we die in God's favour, and in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God hath borne ample testimony to the happiness of his children's death, that it is to be desired; for he oftentimes shortens the days of those whom he favours and esteems the most. Thus, because he found some good thing in the person Abijah, the eldest son of Jeroboam, king of Israel, he took him away in the flower of his age, 1 Kings xiv. 13. He granted the same favour to Josiah, king of Judah, one of the most religious and zealous princes in the world, as he had declared to him by Huldah the prophetess, Behold I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place, 2 Kings xxii. 20. Without doubt they are at all times blessed, which die in the Lord, that they may rest from their labours, Rev. xiv. 13; but I esteem them doubly happy which die, or rather which cease to die, in these miserable times, so full of disorder and confusion.

Would you not laugh at a workman that should grieve at his task being finished, and the painful labour of the day over? Or at a traveller that should lament to see the end of his journey, after having travelled all day through briers and brambles, scorched by the burning heat of the sun, or pinched by the cold of a severe winter? Or at one that, having been tossed by the waves of a tempestuous sea, should weep at coming into the port, to see himself safe from the danger of shipwreck? Wretched man! who art afflicted and terrified at the approach of death, thou art far more foolish and extravagant than those of whom we speak; for the most painful labours of the workman, the grievous fatigues of the most wearisome journey, and the swelling waves of the most troubled sea, are nothing in comparison of the labours, misery and troubles of this languishing life.

You would not only think it folly and extravagance, but the very height of madness, in a prisoner that should sorrow for being delivered out of his noisome dungeon; or in a galley-slave that should be angry at being freed from his

chains; or in an offender that should mourn when he is taken down from the rack. What think ye? Is there less madness and extravagance in yourselves, when ye sorrow to see death deliver your souls from this miserable body, wherein it is imprisoned, dismissing it from the slavish employments of this unhappy age, more grievous and intolerable than that of the gallies, and freeing your souls from those bitter agonies, which are far more painful and racking than the most cruel tortures.

The patriarch Noah, when he went out of the ark that rested upon the mountains of Ararat, had not so much reason to praise God, and to offer up unto him the sacrifice of thanksgiving, as we have, when he is pleased to put an end to this deluge of evils and calamities, and to cause this floating life, or rather this living death, to rest upon Mount Sion.

The children of Israel sang songs of thanksgiving when they came out of Egypt, and saw themselves delivered from a bitter and cruel bondage, wherein they had been employed in gathering of stubble, and burning of brick, Exod. xv.; but we have much more reason to rejoice, and to sing songs of triumph, when death takes us out of the world, where we suffer a kind of bondage, labouring in a thousand vanities, and enduring the scorching heat of ten thousand afflictions that consume us.

Thou burnest with indignation, because some of those inconstant people murmured to return again into Egypt, when they were upon the borders of the promised land: but rather burn with indignation against thy own flesh, if it murmurs to return into the world when thou art at the entrance of thy celestial Canaan. Joseph rejoiced when the king of Egypt sent to fetch him out of prison, Gen. xli.; and have we not far greater cause to be joyful when God sends for our souls out of the prison of this world, and causeth them to leave the body, which to them is a kind of dungeon?

If, therefore, it be without impatience or murmuring, I conceive we have a much stronger reason than the prophet Jonah to cry out, O Lord, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live, Jonah iv. 3; or to say with the prophet Elijah, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, 1 Kings xix. 4. Such a soul may, in a holy transport, safely breathe forth the prayer of David, the man after God's own heart, Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me, Psal. cxlii. 7.

XXV.

Prayer and Meditation for a Christian, who comforts himself with the consideration, that death delivers us from all the evils which reign in the world, and under which we groan.

O adorable Prince of my salvation! thou hast hitherto strengthened me against all fears of death; and now I heartily beseech thee to afford me such grace, that, instead of terrifying and afflicting me, death may comfort and rejoice me. Let me not follow the example of thy people Israel, who forgetting their former cruel bondage, and minding only the plenty and pleasures of Egypt, murmured to return back from the borders of Canaan. On the contrary, grant that I may banish from my heart the vain pleasures of the world, and all the deceitful lusts of the flesh; and that I may so mind the labours and miseries of this present state, that as a workman gladly sees night put an end to his toil, or as a traveller, either by sea or land, willingly enters the haven or inn where he is to rest, I may look upon death in the same joyful manner; and the rather, because of the horrid disorders that reign in the world, the deluge of vice that overwhelms the earth, the rivers of blood that flow on every side, and the fire and sword that threaten and devour us. The lamentable state of thy distressed church chiefly affects me; this is like a small boat in the midst of a tempestuous sea, ready to sink, was it not for thy powerful protection, who commandest the winds and the waves; or like the three children in the fiery furnace, in danger to be consumed, didst thou not restrain the fury of the flames; or like a Daniel in the midst of hungry lions, which would devour him in an instant, didst thou not stop their mouths. O my God! when wilt thou put thy seal upon mine eyes, that I may no longer behold such bloody tragedies? When wilt thou stretch out thine hand from on high, and lift me out of this dreadful gulf? When wilt thou send thy holy angels to deliver me from the fire of these afflictions? And when shall I no longer behold the nations made drunk with the cup of thy fury? When shall I cease from seeing thy church bow down beneath the weight of its cross? And when shall I no longer hear the lamentations of thy spouse, the cries of thy children, the groans of thy servants and prisoners, and the mourning of thine inheritance?

O my heavenly Father, my only hope! when wilt thou free me from this chain of sorrows? When wilt thou deliver me from the storms and tempests of this enraged sea? When shall my soul be delivered from the cares and fears that oppress it? And when shall my body be no longer a prey to the sickness and racking pains that consume it? O Lord! thou knowest all things: thou knowest that I am in the world as in a prison, and that my soul dwells in this wretched body as in a dungeon. Lift up the light of thy countenance upon thy servant, and smite me with the hand of grace, to wake me from my slumber. Cause my chains to fall off, open the gates of this dark prison, and grant that I may follow joyfully the good angel that shall bring me out of this tedious captivity, into a place where I shall never be exposed to the assaults of Satan and the world, which endeavour to destroy me, that they may triumph in my ruin. Then, when I find myself in the streets of thy heavenly Jerusalem, I shall know of a surety that thou hast delivered me, and will for ever magnify thy holy and wonderful works in the assembly and church of the first-born, which triumph in heaven; where past sorrows shall no more be remembered; where there is neither crying, nor pain, nor hunger, nor thirst; and where the heats of affliction shall not light on us; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed us, and shall lead us unto living fountains of waters, and shall wipe away all tears from our eyes. *Amen.*

CHAPTER XXI.

The ninth Consolation. Death delivers us from Sin, which we see reigning in the world, and from the remains of our own corruption.

When God sent his angels from heaven to bring Lot out of Sodom, and secure him from the flames with which he was about to destroy that abominable city, this good man's wife could not forbear looking back, but she was punished the same moment, by being turned into a pillar of salt, the emblem of that holy prudence which this tragical example recommends to posterity, Gen. xix. That which made this unhappy woman break the angel's express command, was her longing after the pleasures and rich abundance of that

country from which she was departing, without once reflecting upon the horrid abominations with which it was defiled, and the crying sins, which had brought God's anger and just vengeance upon the wicked inhabitants. Thus, when God is pleased to take us out of the world, and to secure us from the feeling of his dreadful judgments, that which causes us to look back, and hinders us from following the angels that God sends to lead us up to the mountain of our salvation, is our thinking upon nothing but the riches, honours and pleasures of this miserable world, instead of considering the iniquities that reign here below, and with which we are ourselves defiled, while we continue in this sinful flesh.

Christian souls, will you prepare yourselves with a holy readiness to go to God? Is it your desire that death should comfort and rejoice your hearts, instead of afflicting them? Cast your eyes upon the dreadful vices that reign in the world, under the burthen of which the whole creation groans. O good God! in what an age are we born? An age like that of Noah; for all flesh hath corrupted his way upon the earth, Gen. vi. 12; and nothing but a deluge of fire is able to purge it. There never was more injustice, perfidiousness, treachery, debauchery, insolence and envy; never more vanity, luxury, pride, cruelty, blasphemy, impiety and atheism. We may justly apply to our days, what the prophet Hosea says of the corruption of his time, There is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood, Hos. iv. 1, 2. Therefore we have good cause to prefer David's prayer, Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men. They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips, and with a double heart, do they speak, Psal. xii. 1, 2. O wicked world! a world overflowing with iniquity, a sink of uncleanness, a fiery furnace, belching out flames from the bottomless pit, and choked with the smoke of hell. But sin not only reigns in this miserable world, it also defaces the beauty of the church, and makes dreadful havoc among those that bear the glorious name of Christians. They were anciently to be discerned from the rest of the world by their speech, conversation and behaviour; but the devil hath blotted out this divine character, defaced this heavenly image, taken away this noble distinction, and removed this precious land mark. We can say to few Christians of our age, as was said to the apostle St Peter, Thy speech bewrayeth

thee, Matt. xxvi. 73 ; nor what the patriarch Isaac said to one of his sons, The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau, Gen. xxvii. 22. For they have both the voice and hands of profane Esau ; they speak and live like him ; they publish their crimes with a front of brass, and seek their glory in their shame. The air is infected with their profane and unclean language, their impudent lies, fearful oaths and grievous blasphemies ; and the earth is defiled with their horrid sins and detestable iniquities. Covetousness, ambition, lust and all manner of vices, have ascended to the throne, and tyrannize with an uncontrolled dominion. They who have in their mouths the holy name of the Lord Jesus, and make profession of treading in his sacred footsteps, give us cause to renew St Paul's lamentation, and to cry out with him, Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things, Phil. iii. 18, 19.

If we would seek in these days for the Christian virtues, where shall we find faith, hope and charity ? Where shall we meet with righteousness, fidelity, holiness, innocence, goodness, meekness, humility, patience, piety and devotion ? You daughters of heaven, what is become of you ? We cannot see any more your angelical countenances. We are so far from beholding the delightful beams of your divine presence, that we cannot spy out your footsteps upon earth. You may thereby understand, Christians, that the Son of God is at hand ; for iniquity abounds, charity grows cold, and there is no more faith upon earth.

In the midst of such a woeful corruption, who of us afflicts his soul, as righteous Lot ? Who weeps day and night, as David, a man after God's own heart ? Where can we spy out the fountains of tears of the prophet Jeremiah ? Or the confusion of the face of Daniel ? Or the zeal of Moses and Phineas, and of St Paul ? If the angel of God, that went through the midst of Jerusalem, did take a review in our days of the inhabitants of this land, I am afraid he would not find many marked with the letter tau ; nor any weeping and sighing for the abominations that are amongst us. For evil and wickedness are become familiar to us, by the means of a universal infection. Our continual conversation with the vicious, accustoms us to their heinous crimes, and to their impious discourses ; as we are accustomed by degrees to breathe in an unwholesome air without aversion, and to

hear the fearful downfall of the cataracts of the river Nile without repugnancy.

But we are so far from grieving at the universal inundation of vice in the world, that we ourselves are carried away with the impetuous torrent of corruption. Sin gets upon us insensibly, and overcomes us; so that the world is not unlike to the house mentioned by God in the 14th chapter of Leviticus; for it is not only infected with an incommodious leprosy, but it infects all such as dwell therein. The men of the world have an easier task to teach us their vice, than we have to teach and persuade them to virtue; as a pestiferous body may spread the infection, and give it to a thousand who are sound; whereas, a thousand in perfect health cannot heal one infected with the plague: so that, as under the ceremonial law the clean vessels sanctified not the defiled; but the defiled infected, by its approaches, such as were clean; evil companies corrupt good manners, and the flames of the most burning zeal are extinguished by the coldness of the age. As lambs cannot feed among briers and thorns, without leaving behind them some of their wool; likewise the harmless and meek souls cannot live amongst so much cozenage and malice, without losing something of their innocence and Christian simplicity.

Who is it amongst us that can say, with a safe conscience, that the world is crucified to him, and that he is crucified to the world? Gal. vi; or who is it that lives in the world without being guilty of its sins, as the fish drinks of the sea water, and receives nothing of its bitterness? Psal. xxvi. Who can converse in the courts of princes, as Joseph in Egypt, as Daniel in Babylon, or as Queen Esther in the court of Ahasuerus? Is there any that can justly say, that he hath washed his hands in innocence, and purified his conscience from all dead works to serve the living God? Heb. ix. Who can speak in this manner, I have purified my heart, I am clean from my sin? Prov. xx. In truth, If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us, 1 John i. We have good reason to break out in the prophet Isaiah's exclamation, when he saw God sitting upon his throne, Wo is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, Isa. vi. Or we may say with the same prophet, From the sole of the foot, unto the crown of the head, there is no whole part. Not only the souls that are fixed on the earth, but such as mount up to heaven by fervent prayers and devout meditations, have good cause to

acknowledge their imperfections, and to ask forgiveness. If any fancy himself to be perfectly whole, and free from all infection, let him look into his conscience, and seriously examine it, and it will happen to him as to Moses; when he put his hand into his bosom, he took it out again as white as snow, all covered with leprosy, Exod. iv. Where is there a Christian, that feels no law commanding in his members, and struggling against the law of his mind? Who is there, that finds not by experience the truth of St Paul's saying, The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would? Rom. vii.; Gal. v. Without doubt, such as know not, nor ever have felt, the bitter and vehement strugglings of their carnal lusts that war against the soul, 2 Pet. i., cannot conceive what it is to deny themselves, to put off the old man with his deeds, to crucify the flesh with its affections and filthy lusts, Eph. iv. Such know not what it is to mortify our members, to cut off our right feet and right hands, and to pluck out our right eyes, Matt v., that is to say, to destroy, and by a holy violence, to give a dreadful wound to all our brutish passions and vicious affections, when they should seem to us as dear and useful as our hands and feet, and as tender as our right eyes, Col. iii.; Matt. v.

If these cursed affections could but declare their names, they would say as the evil spirits of the gospel, Our name is legion; for we are many. As that devil that possessed the lunatic, mentioned by St Matthew; cast him sometimes into the fire, at other times into the water; thus these carnal lusts labour to cast us, sometimes into the flames of ambition, or into the burning heat of covetousness, or to hurry us headlong into the gulf of unlawful delights, or into the mud of filthy and carnal pleasures. Furthermore, they break the chains and ties with which we imagine to stop their fury; they war and fight against us by day and by night, and at every moment they return to charge us home, and renew the combat. Every where they assault us, and have no more respect for temples and houses of prayer, than for common and public places. As Satan had once the boldness to encounter with Joshua the high priest, before the angel of God; likewise these cursed lusts are so impudent as to attempt us in the most religious assemblies, and the devoutest congregations, as well as where we are engaged in the most hellish and debauched companies of the world.

But these lusts, that war against the soul, are as subtle and

malicious, as they are cruel and obstinate: when they perceive us upon our guard, and see that there is nothing to be got, they conceal their weapons and their fire, but it is with a design to surprise and burn us when we are least aware. As there are certain creatures that counterfeit the dead, that men might spare their labour to kill them: likewise this treacherous flesh appears of its own accord as dead, that we might spare it, and not totally deprive it of life. If then we leave it in peace and quiet, it recovers its strength and vigour, and assaults us afresh with its poisonous darts. When we imagine that we have cut up this wretched plant by the root, it grows and breaks forth into bitterness. When we think that we have put out this fire with the tears of our repentance, it kindles again, and bursts forth into fierce flames. As soon as we have cut the cunning serpent to pieces with the sharp knife of true repentance, it gets together, and when it seems to have lost all strength and heat, it recovers again in our breasts, and wounds us to the very heart. In short, as the evil spirit mentioned by our Saviour in the gospel, when he was driven out of one house, waited for a good opportunity to return; which as soon as he perceived, he took unto himself seven other spirits worse than himself, so that the last condition of that man was worse than the first, Mark xii., thus after an afflicting fast, and fervent prayers; after a torrent of contrite tears; when we imagine that we have cast out of our hearts the most dangerous lusts; if we begin to relent, and to open to them the door, they burst in again upon us with more fury, and render the sequel of our life far more bitter and unpleasant.

But if you had not so many sins, and your lusts were not so violent, when the old man should not have so much strength in our members, and the temptations should not overcome us so often; tell me, I pray, Christian souls, in what virtue do you excel? Have you all the beauty, the glory and perfection that God requires? Is your holiness without the least spot or blemish? Is your innocence as white as snow, and as bright as the light? Is your zeal as hot and burning as that of the seraphims? Is your charity sincere, without paint or disguise, as that of Christ, who gave his life for you? Do you love God for his name sake, or because of his excellent perfections? Do you love him with all your heart, with all your strength, and with all your thoughts? Do you love him more than you love yourselves, or any thing in the world? Do you hate all things that he hates? And do you carefully abstain from every thing that

displeaseth him? Do you love your neighbour in God, and for the sake of that good God whose image he bears? Do you love him as you love yourselves, without hypocrisy or disguise? Do you never deal otherwise with others, than you would have them deal with you? And do you perform to them the same good offices that you would have them perform to you, if they were in the same condition as you are at present? Do you shine in the midst of the dark night of this age, as so many tapers lighted with the beams of the Sun of Righteousness? Phil. ii. Do you live as citizens of heaven, and as fellow citizens of the saints, and as the children of God? Phil. i. 5. Or as such as expect the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and Saviour Jesus Christ? Tit. ii. Is your heart in heaven, where your treasure should be, and your glory and happiness? And do you walk as persons that ascend up by the steps and degrees of piety to the heavenly Jerusalem? Do you go from faith to faith, from hope to hope? And do you make every day some new progress in holiness? Do you never grieve the Holy Spirit, by whom you have been sealed for the day of redemption? Are you immoveable, abounding always in the work of the Lord? Ephes. iv. And do you endeavour to be found in him, without spot or blemish in peace? 1 Cor. xv.; 2 Pet. ii.

Tell me, devout souls, whether you be not as the fire and light? For as there is no flame so pure, but hath its smoke, no star so bright, but disappears at the rising of the sun; so there is no life so holy and harmless, but hath its imperfections, and cannot abide the sight of an impartial God, and the exact inquisition of his justice. When we have well prayed and wept, and begged forgiveness, God hath bestowed upon us a new heart and a new spirit: after all, we have need that he should enlighten us afresh with the gracious beams of his Divine countenance, that he should lead us by the hand, direct us by his wisdom, and accomplish his virtue by our infirmities.

Examine seriously, my dear friends, to what exercise of devotion you are most inclined, and what secret motions you feel in your souls. Who is it that hath the greatest share in your heart and affection? What thoughts lull you asleep, and what are those that awake you? What do you think upon, for the most part? Upon God and his glory, or upon the world and its vanities? Upon heaven and its excellencies, or upon the earth and its riches? Upon paradise and its immortal delights, or upon the flesh and its base satisfac-

tions? And when you meditate upon divine things, are you certain that you perform it with a religious attention, with an inward delight that ravishes and comforts poor souls? And when you offer any prayers to God, do you discharge this duty with humility and a holy zeal? Are your hearts and affections carried up to heaven before you lift up thitherward your eyes and hands? Are your orisons like the perfume of the saints that come out of golden phials? Are they like the incense of the ancient Israelites, that smoked upon an altar, burning with a celestial fire? Do they thus proceed from a soul purified by faith, which is more precious than fine gold? Do they come from a heart that is inflamed with a zeal that never dies, and that ascends continually on high? Do you bestow your alms with that earnest and fervent charity that God requires of you? Do you open your bowels to your brethren, before you open to them your purse? And do you bestow your hearts upon the poor before you bestow your money.

And for the public devotions that you owe to God, pray tell me with what humility and respect they are performed. Do you call your delight the days dedicated to his glory, and to the celebration of his holy mysteries? Isa. lviii. Or do you look upon them as troublesome? Do not they cause you to complain in yourselves, as those profane Jews spoken of by Malachi, *behold what a weariness is it!* Mal. i. Do you go up to the house of God with the voice of melody, and transports of joy? Psal. xli. Or do you go up thither out of custom, in a careless manner? When Jacob went up to Bethel to offer sacrifices, he buried under ground all the gods of gold and silver that were in his family, Gen. xxxv. Likewise, you religious souls, when you intend to go up to offer your spiritual sacrifices in the true Bethel, where God bestows in such plenty his bread from heaven that gives life to the world; do you not forget to bury all your earthly cares, your carnal lusts? Or else, do you nourish in your hearts all those false gods, of whom the world is so fond? Do you look upon the holy assemblies with an unconcerned eye? Or do you behold them with reverence and respect, as the living images of that glorious church, gathered together before God's majestic throne, which worship him day and night in his holy temple? Are those divine psalms that are there sung, only upon your tongues? Or do you sing them with your hearts to the Lord? Do you think upon the angel's songs, and the Holy Spirit's hallelujahs, with sacred transports of joy? Is the word of God only an airy sound, that strikes

your ears, or doth it reach your consciences? Col. iii. Doth not your heart burn within you, while God speaks by the ministry of his servants; and opens to you his Holy Scriptures? Rev. xix. Doth this heart of yours burn with a heavenly fire, or with restless impatience, to see the end of your devotions, that you might return to your domestic affairs, to your worldly delights, or to your carnal pastimes? Luke xiv. Doth your soul thirst for God, for the strong and living God? Psal. xliii. And is the performing of the holy will of your heavenly Father, become your meat and your only delight? John iv.; Psal. ciii. In short, do you fly as swift as the blessed angels, when your great God and Saviour offers to you an occasion of advancing his kingdom, of comforting his chosen, and edifying the souls for whom he died? When Abraham offered unto God many beasts in sacrifice, a flight of birds came, and lighted upon his dead offerings, Gen. xv. Thus, when we present unto God the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, and intend to multiply the acts of our devotions, a great number of vain and idle thoughts come to interrupt us. Abraham frighted away those troublesome birds; but it is not always in our power to drive away from our minds these intruding thoughts that disturb us in our devotion. When we lift up ourselves unto God, and draw near to his sacred throne, our hearts are far more dull and heavy than ever Moses's hands were; so that they fall down again to the earth, and mind earthly things. We need, therefore, that our Chief Priest should hold them up: and furthermore it is necessary that they should be perfumed with the sweet odours of his most holy sacrifices, Exod. xvii.

If David, a man after God's own heart, entreats that he would be pleased to sanctify the words of his mouth and the meditations of his heart, Psal. xv., if the prophet Daniel, whom the Holy Spirit styles a man greatly beloved, Dan. ix., who spent the days and nights in devotion, seeks how to make his prayers acceptable to God; if the prophet Isaiah had need that his lips should be purified with a burning coal taken from the altar, Isa. vi. Who will wonder if the meditations of the devoutest souls be so often interrupted? If their prayers be so cold and luke-warm, who can think it strange, that we are not able to pray as we ought? Rom. viii. And that we had need to desire God's Holy Spirit of prayer and supplication, who prays and intercedes for us with sighs and groans which cannot be expressed, Zech. xiii.; Rom. viii.

That which afflicts most the true believers, is, that when

they imagine that they have attained to some kind of perfection in the exercises of piety, they find many times, to their unspeakable sorrow, that they are but beginners, and that they have made no progress at all. For as the stone cast into the air falls down of its own accord by reason of its natural weight; and as the water often heated, becomes so often cold and frozen, because cold is a property belonging to it; likewise our souls, that mount up to God in holy meditations and zealous prayers, fall down again to these earthly vanities; they become cold and heavy; for these are their natural properties. If God refused the sacrifices of such beasts as were lame and sickly, how will he accept of us, or our devotions, if he should treat us with severity, who are faint in his service, and cannot walk in his ways without halting and stumbling every moment? For these considerations I may apply to the spiritual joy, what was said of the earthly and worldly mirth, Joy is cut off by sadness, Isa. lxv. For when we have felt in our breasts this unspeakable joy of the Holy Ghost, and it begins afterwards to abate, it seems to us as if it had taken its flight to heaven, as the smoke of Manoah's sacrifice; then as great a sorrow seizeth upon our souls; therefore we may complain, and cry out as David, Will the Lord cast me off for ever, and will he be favourable no more! Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in his anger shut up his tender mercies? Psal. lxxvii. And pray in the language of Isaiah, Lord, awaken thy jealousy, and the stirring of thy bowels that are shut up to me. Finally, if after all the exercises of devotion, if after a serious and settled meditation upon God's holy word, if after fasting and mortification, and prayers and tears, and a constant attendance in the duties of religion, we find any good progress in piety, we may then also perceive vice to proceed out of our most glorious virtues, and perfectest graces. For as the moth enters soonest into the richest stuffs and cloths; thus pride creeps into the noblest souls, and breeds in the most enlightened understandings. As a primitive doctor of the Christian church hath very well observed, all vices are begot by corruption, and by other vices; only pride and presumption proceed from virtue. O how hard a task is it for a man enabled with gifts and perfections that raise him above the vulgar, not to be puffed up with pride, nor deceived with a fond conceit of himself! As the beautiful bird looks upon and admires the dainty and various colours of its wings; thus we behold and

admire ourselves, we are in love with our own beauty, and idolize our virtues. Therefore as the nurse leaves the child sometimes to its legs, and suffers it to fall, that it might know its own strength, and learn to hold fast by the hand; thus God withdraws from us the assistance of his grace to humble us, and to cause us to implore most earnestly the help, and favourable succours of his Holy Spirit. When St Peter felt the sacred flames of that holy zeal that was kindled in his heart, and that sincere love that he had for Christ, he rejoiced and imagined himself to be strong enough to resist all the powers of hell, and to frustrate all the fiery darts of the devil. This good opinion that he had of himself, and of his own ability, transports him to that confidence, as to contradict our Saviour Christ, and to protest, Although all should be offended in thee, yet will I not be offended; though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. This was he that trembled at the voice of a damsel, whose fall and apostacy was as remarkable as his confidence was great; so that he, who thinketh he standeth, should take heed lest he fall, Rom. xi.

There is no good-natured child, but is vexed to live amongst such as curse and reproach its parents; and if it should happen to be concerned unawares in the offence, or to occasion the death of him from whom it had its being, it will feel an eternal displeasure. Now, it is certain, that whilst we live in this world, we must spend our time amongst those that blaspheme the holy name of God, and abuse the glory of his eternal Godhead. Moreover, vice and corruption are so universal; that we overselves offend this father of mercies and compassions; we add sin to sin, and complete the measure of our iniquities.

Let us therefore conclude from hence, believing souls, that death is not to be feared as an evil, or a calamity, but that it is rather desirable as an advantage, and a blessing. For seeing that it is to be longed for, because it frees us from all the mischiefs and sufferings of the world; we are rather to seek it with God's good leave, because it closeth our eyes, and conveys out of our sight all the sins and abominations that are in the world; and because it stops our ears, and hinders us from hearing the impieties, and the filthy discourses that infect the air. Since death is to be embraced with joy, because it delivers our bodies from the diseases that torment them, and our minds from the cares and displeasures that vex and afflict them, it deserves to be welcomed with greater expressions of gladness, because it delivers us from all remains of sin, and puts a period to our natural corruption: so

that it is to be esteemed, and looked upon, as the death and destruction of the old man, rather than the death of a true believer.

Sampson rejoiced in his death, because he knew, that in dying, his mortal enemies should die also, and be destroyed with him. We have more cause to rejoice at our death, and to give God thanks at that time; since in our dying, or rather in passing from death to life, we may see the destruction of all the dangerous enemies of our salvation, who are more dreadful to us than the Philistines were to Sampson. All the most cruel and barbarous men of the world are not so much to be feared, as the lusts of our filthy flesh, that put out the eyes of our understanding, that cause us to be the devil's sport, and to worship many false gods.

We commonly run out with haste from a place infected with the plague: and should we not make as much speed by our vows and prayers, to get out of the world, since vice is so infectious and universal all over it, that so many thousand souls are therewith miserably spoiled; since the world is a Babylon, where all manner of debauchery, vice and folly are mixed together; where injustice and impiety reign? Have you not greater cause to be transported with joy, when God delivers us from our woeful captivity, than the children of Israel had when it pleased him to call them out of Babylon? Should they not sing to him, when the Lord brought them back, and restored them to Zion, who came from their captivity, we were as those that dream; then our mouths were full of laughter, and our tongues with songs of triumph?

In short, as the Lord Jesus, when he had restored Lazarus to life, and taken him out of his grave, had compassion on him, and could not see him any longer wrapped up in his winding sheet, and tied with a napkin; therefore he commanded, *Loose him, and let him go.* Thus this merciful Lord, who hath made us to be partakers of the first resurrection, and called our souls out of the noisome grave of our lusts, is moved with compassion for us, when he sees these wretched souls drag about them the relics of sin, and some remains of that corruption in which they were wrapped. Therefore he will cause them to hear his sweet and comfortable voice, *Loose them, and let them go.* Let them go to the eternal mansions, to the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, to the glorious companies of angels, and to the church and congregation of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven.

XXVI.

Prayer and Meditation for a true Christian who comforts himself with this consideration, that Death shall deliver him from Sin, that reigns so much in the world, and from all remains of his wretched corruption.

O most gracious High Priest, holy, innocent, separated from sinners, exalted above all heavens, who art now shining in light and glory; look upon me from thy sanctuary, and have compassion on my wretched state. Thou understandest well the cause of my grief, O Lord, who searchest the heart, and readest my most secret thoughts, that I grieve to see so much injustice and impiety reigning this day in the world; to see vice and wickedness defacing thy holy church. But that which chiefly increaseth my pain, and aggravates my displeasure is, to find myself guilty, and spotted with the general corruption, and my flesh warring and struggling against the spirit. The lusts of the flesh not only disturb me, but they get many times the victory, and insult over mine infirmities. Sin appears to me, not only in all its hellish deformity, so that I am thereby ashamed of myself; but I also acknowledge, to the praise of thy grace, that all that is best in me, cannot endure an exact inquisition of thy justice. Alas, my God! how imperfect is my piety; how languishing is my devotion! I worship thee too much from custom, and in a very slight manner. I often praise thee with my tongue, and honour thee with my lips, whilst my heart is far from thee. The love I bear to thee is not pure and fervent; and my charity, instead of being burning, is quite cold, or luke-warm. I have not a sufficient trust upon thy promises, and upon thy Fatherly care; my hope is not settled, it doth not fill my soul with heavenly joys and comforts. Thine eyes, O Lord, that see all the secret closets of my heart, and pierce into the depths, are too holy and pure to pass over the sight of evils, and to approve of the ill-favoured features of Satan, yet imprinted in me. Thou discoverest not only my sins, iniquities, and all my evil deeds, but thou also beholdest all the spots and imperfections of my best performances, and of my most glorious acts. My Lord and my God, I am not only grieved to see so much sin in the world, in the church and in myself, but I am also troubled that I have not grief enough; that my soul is not sufficiently

vexed, as that of righteous Lot; that the zeal of thine house doth not eat me up, as it did the man after thine own heart; that mine eyes are not become a well-spring of tears as those of the prophet; that I am not heartily concerned for thy church, as thine holy apostle; and that I do not sigh and cry, as the servants whom thou didst mark with the letter tau. O wonderful Lord! since it is thy pleasure, wherefore do I not embrace thee with a lively faith, and a sincere repentance? Wherefore do I not strive by prayers and supplications, to obtain from thee thy most precious blessings, an inward change of myself and spirit, that I may heartily love, fear and adore thee as thou deservest? O Lord, I find that thou hast not forsaken me, but hast commissioned death to convey me out of this troublesome and sorrowful abode, to destroy all my mortal enemies, my sins and lusts, and advance me to the freedom of thy children. I am not disturbed at the approach of so great a benefactor that rejoiceth my heart, and causeth me to embrace and welcome its arrival as thy messenger, sent to draw me out of this Egypt of cruelty and oppression, out of this Babylon of vice and abomination. I am ready, Lord; when wilt thou free me from these chains and fetters of mortality, to ascend up to my God and Saviour, who is ready to embrace me? Despatch to me some of thy blessed angels who may carry me up to thy holy mountain, to thine heavenly Jerusalem, to thy glorious paradise, where no impurity can be admitted, no serpent to seduce us, nor temptations to prevail upon us, where I shall never offend thee, nor grieve thy Holy Spirit, whereby I am sealed to the day of redemption. O my God! I am weary to hear thy holy name so often blasphemed, and to see so much impiety and wickedness reigning every where in the world. Haste my departure hence, and the accomplishmeut of all the glorious promises of salvation to thy church and people; when I shall behold thy face continually, love thee with a perfect love, and worship thee without disturbance in the society of the glorified spirits and holy angels; when I shall sing forth thy praises in heaven, be clothed with the white robes of thy holy martyrs, and with the seraphims attend upon thy magnificent throne. O my God! grant that thy holy zeal, kindled in my soul, may serve me as a fiery chariot, and a sacred flame, to carry and hasten me up to thy celestial palace, where thou hast prepared for me an eternal mansion, and a blessed inheritance. *Amen.*

CHAPTER XXII.

The tenth Consolation is, the glory and happiness of our souls at their departure out of the body.

If there were neither punishment nor torment after this life to be feared, the wicked and unbelievers, who prosper in the world, might justly esteem themselves the happiest of all men. And if there were neither glory nor rewards to be expected after death, the righteous and the faithful, who drink here below cups full of bitterness and sorrow, would be the most miserable of all creatures. The condition of the beasts would appear more happy than theirs; for they enjoy in quiet and peace, all the pleasures that their animal nature is able to relish. They are not tormented by so many diseases as vex our bodies; neither do they know the cares and displeasures that consume and fret our minds. They grieve not for the time past, nor trouble themselves with any apprehensions of the time to come. They never feel the fierce assaults of lust; they are ignorant of many of those passions that torment and domineer over our souls. All their pains and sufferings vanish with their breath; so that when they are dead, their sufferings have an end. If we make our eyes the judges of these things, we may say, *the accident that happens to men and beasts is the same accident; as the death of one, so is the death of the other.* But if we search and examine farther, we shall find more difference than between heaven and earth, between light and darkness: for it is true, that the death of beasts delivers them from the sense of all evils, but doth not introduce them into any real happiness. When it puts an end to their misery, it puts a period to their being, and to all that pleasure and content, which they formerly enjoyed; for they die without any hopes of living again.

If we look to the wicked and unbelievers, we shall find that death deprives them not only of their honours, riches, and of all their pleasures and carnal enjoyments, but puts out their taper in the blackest darkness, and all their greatest delights are lost in a vast sea of bitterness. If death looseth them from the chain of misery, unto which all the children of

Adam are tied, if it frees their bodies from the pain of any temporal evils, it casts their souls into eternal torments. But for the virtuous and believing Christians, if death is so great a friend to them, because it delivers them from many evils and miseries, it is a greater friend, in regard as it opens to them the gate that leads to an endless glory and happiness.

The Son of God had a design to persuade us of this truth, in that remarkable parable of the 16th of St Luke's gospel. For at one hand he shows a rich miser clothed in purple and fine linen, feeding upon danties, and living in much splendour and magnificence; and at the other he discovers to us a poor wretch, named Lazarus, all covered with sores, lying at the rich man's gate, intreating that he might share with the dogs in the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. The dogs had compassion on him, and licked his sores. At last the poor man died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. O wonderful change! He that was lately a companion scarce good enough for dogs, now solaces himself in the angel's embraces. He that was lying at the gate of a proud and unmerciful wretch, is admitted into the glorious palace of immortality, and reposes himself in the bosom of a charitable and rich Abraham, where he is satisfied with the bread of the living God, and drinks of the rivers of his pleasures. The rich man died also; but whilst his body was laid in the earth with state and honour, the devils dragged his soul into hell, and cast it into a fire that burns continually, and that nothing is able to extinguish. Therefore our Saviour represents this damned soul, crying out of hell-fire, *Father Abraham, have pity upon me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in these flames.* In the next verse our Lord shows how all the complaints of the damned are fruitless, and their tortures remediless. He makes Abraham return an answer to this wretched son, *My son remember, that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.*

The heathens have looked upon death as the end of all their afflictions and sufferings; but they have never tasted of the powers of the life to come, they have never had any assurance of future glory and happiness. The spiritual joys, and celestial comforts, God keeps for them that fear him, and worship him in spirit and in truth. These precious riches, and divine excellencies, are only discoverable to the faithful, chiefly since the time in which Christ our Saviour hath

brought life and immortality to light, through the gospel. Hitherto I have given you a short survey of the calamities that attend upon us in this mortal state. I have essayed to present to you all the comforts that we may gather from thence, to strengthen a believing soul, and enable it to withstand and endure all the encounters with which it is assaulted in this valley of tears. At present I intend to describe its future happiness, when it is separated from the body, and introduced into heaven. I shall, as far as I am able, discover to you that glory and bliss which our souls enjoy, in expectation of the great morn of the resurrection. You must not think to see here any perfect image of our celestial paradise, or any magnificent draught of the advantages reserved for us there. It would be as difficult a task as to paint the sun in its splendour, or to measure the waters of the sea. I cannot find words to express my thoughts; all my conceptions are far below a happiness so perfect, and a glory so sublime. I shall think that I have done enough, if I can but represent to you some few beams of so great a light, if I can but show some drops of that ocean of heavenly pleasures, in which we shall swim for all eternity.

I shall not deliver any thing from my own fancy, nor offer to speak of that which I have never learned from the great doctor of our souls. I shall not engage myself in vain speculations, more fit to please and puff up the curious wits, than to comfort and rejoice the devout souls, or satisfy such as hunger and thirst after righteousness. One word from the mouth of the Lord, is better, and far more worth than all the reasonings of human wisdom, than all the subtleties of philosophy, than all the arguings and conclusions of the most refined and eloquent sages. In this description I shall not seek mine own glory, nor the applause of the world, but the glory of my God, and the instruction of souls which he hath purchased with his blood. I desire to be understood of the weakest capacities as well as of the learned. I hope that such as know the language of Canaan, such as have tasted of the good word of God, and of the powers of the life to come, will not mistake me. For others who have not been accustomed to the relish of spiritual things, to whom the language of God's Holy Spirit is insipid and unsufferable; if they are not moved nor benefited by this treatise, I dare say it is none of my fault, but theirs. Therefore, as the wise men when they travelled to Bethlehem, where Jesus Christ was lying in a manger, took the star of the east for their guide; so we, who are marching to our true Bethlehem, where our

great God and Saviour is sitting upon the throne of his glory, will follow no other guidance, but that divine light which comes down from heaven. And as it is impossible to number all the stars that shine in the heavens, for which reason we reduce them to certain figures and constellations; thus we will not undertake to show you every particular of our private meditations, upon this rich and divine subject; but we will discourse to you of the chief heads, leaving the rest to your pious thoughts, and the information of God's Holy Spirit.

Whosoever thou art that hast embraced Christ, dead and crucified, by faith and repentance, and knowest thyself united to him, and incorporated into his mystical body, remember to praise this merciful Lord, and rejoice in his salvation. Learn to admire the super-excellent riches of the treasures of his grace, and seriously consider how magnificent and liberal he is to thee. For he intends not only to deliver thee from all the sufferings and calamities that afflict thee, but he will also raise thee up to the highest and most transcendent felicity. He will not only draw thee out of the deep abyss of death, and eternal damnation, but he will take thee up to the enjoyment of the most blessed life and immortal glory. He will not only remove thee from this wretched wilderness, where thou art tormented with hunger and thirst, and exposed to the scorching heat of a burning sun, in poisonous bitings of the fiery serpents, but he will introduce thee to the celestial Canaan, where the milk and honey of the purest joys, and most solid comforts flow in abundance, and where thou shalt for ever repose thyself, under the refreshing shadow of the tree of life. He will not only deliver thee from the captivity of this miserable world, which is a true Babylon, full of all manner of abominations; but he will lead thee into his holy Jerusalem, and carry thee thither upon his arms; not with an intent that thou shouldst build and repair it with cost and labour, that thou shouldst behold the glorious and magnificent structures, reared up by him alone from the creation of the world, and that thou mayest be eternally satisfied with his overflowing plenty. He will not only pluck off from thee the filthy rags of sin and corruption, but he will clothe thee with a garment of light, of perfect righteousness and holiness. He will not only wipe away all tears from thine eyes, but he will put into thy mouth songs of praise and thanksgiving. He will not only break the fetters from thy feet, but he will place upon thy head a crown of pure gold. He will not only draw thee out of a black and noisome dungeon,

but he will place thee upon a throne of glory and magnificence. He will not only extinguish all the carnal lusts that war against thee, and put an end to all thy troublesome combats, but he calls thee to the fruition of eternal peace and celestial triumph. In short, God will not only separate thee from the acquaintance of sinful and debauched men, but he will cause thee to enter in amongst the thousands of angels, and admit thee to the vision of his glorious face.

When a compounded thing comes to be dissolved, every part returns to its first principle: thus, when man dies, his body returns to dust, from whence it is taken, and the soul returns to God that gave it. As the bird, when its cage is broken, flies away into the air, to seek its liberty and pleasure; thus when this body is broken to pieces by death, the soul flies above the heavens, where it meets with rest and happiness: or, as it is when the net is torn, the fish falls into the water, where it lives, and enjoys all its delights; so when death comes to break the strings of this wretched body, the soul enters into the river of living water, and into an ocean of heavenly delights: finally, as the death of our Saviour Christ rent in pieces the veil of the earthly sanctuary, and discovered all its wonderful mysteries; thus the death of a believer rends the veil of this infirm and sinful flesh, and gives us a sight of the rich treasures and magnificent excellencies of the heavenly sanctuary. You Christians whom God calls to his glorious rest, who may express the greatness of your future happiness? It is impossible to form a right idea of it. When your whole lives should have been nothing else but a continuation of misery, and a chain of calamities; you have now just cause to comfort yourselves, and rejoice in God with unspeakable joy. For when all things are reckoned up, the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. You can lose nothing in this life, but God will restore it to you a hundred times more in his kingdom; besides, there is no comparison between the advantages of the life to come, and of this mortal state of being. Grieve not, believing souls, to forsake an earth overspread with darkness, full of misery, and all infected with sin, since thy God proposeth to receive thee into new heavens, all enlightened with a divine light, and enriched with endless felicities, where righteousness and holiness sit upon the throne. Grieve not for thy separation from the most pious and regenerated societies, since thou art to be admitted into the companies of the glorified saints and blessed martyrs, who have washed

and whitened their garments in the sacred blood of the Lamb; since thou art from henceforth to be reckoned in the number, and of the society, of the angels of light, and of the glorious cherubims. Fret not to leave behind thee the holy congregations of the militant church, for thou art going apace to the glorious congregation of the church triumphing; and in a few moments thou shalt find thyself amongst the thousands of angels and saints that worship God day and night, and adore him who lives for ever. If God hath bestowed upon thee worldly riches, leave them without regret or displeasure; for thou art going to possess inestimable treasures, which shall never be taken from thee. If thou art advanced to worldly honours, cast off thy purple and scarlet willingly of thine own accord; for God will shortly clothe thee with an inconceivable glory that shall never change. When thou shouldst be raised up to the highest and most splendid dignities, when thou shouldst enjoy a great, a flourishing kingdom, come down from thy throne with joy, and let fall thy sceptre and thy crown; for God calls thee to sit upon a throne that can never be shaken, to an incorruptible crown, and to endless triumphs.

Can there be any town so rich, so great and noble, that thou mayest justly grieve to forsake it, at that time when God intends to make thee a citizen with the glorified saints of the Jerusalem above; where neither crying nor labour, neither fear nor grief, neither poverty nor want, shall never come near thee; where all the inhabitants are kings, and possess inestimable riches? Is there any dwelling so beautiful and magnificent that should cause thee to depart out of it with sorrow? For God will lead thee into his own palace, all built with fine gold and precious stones, where he himself is the light, and the Lamb is the sun? Art thou delighted in the enjoyment of some pleasant inheritance here on earth? Then consider that all the inheritances of the earth are nothing in comparison of that incorruptible inheritance which God keeps for thee in heaven, and hath prepared since the creation of the world. Hast thou a pleasant garden, or a rich field? but what are all the gardens of the world, in respect of the heavenly paradise, where the tree of life grows, that brings forth its fruits every month of the year, and where the river of living water, as transparent as crystal, runs continually?

What reason hast thou, Christian soul, to grieve, when thou forsakest the pleasures of the world, that thou enjoyest with the children of the earth; or the delights of the body,

which are common to thee with the brute beasts: since God will satisfy thee with his most precious delights? For in the blessed vision of his face, thou shalt meet with fulness of joy. Hast thou any friends on earth? Let it not trouble thee to leave them: for instead of one friend here below, whom thou fanciest to be real and sincere, thou hast thousands in heaven, who will receive thee into the eternal mansions, and embrace thee as their companion, and the partaker of the same glory and happiness. Hast thou any parents or relations? I suppose they are not burthensome to thee, and that thou receivest much more pleasure and assistance from them, than grief and ingratitude; yet thou hast a spiritual parentage in heaven, and eternal relations. Thou hast in the mansion-house of thy heavenly Father, a great number of brothers and sisters, with whom thou shalt live in a blessed unity, as members of one body, governed by the same spirit, and inflamed with the same zeal.

Thou husband, whom death snatched away from thy beloved wife, seriously consider, that God will unite thee to himself by an inseparable union, and that he purposeth to take up to him some part of thyself, that thy expectations, thy hopes and affections, might be now in heaven; and thou also, O woman! whom death plucks out of the embraces of thy dear and loving husband, remember that thou hast a husband also in heaven, who hath espoused thee to himself for ever in righteousness, in mercy and compassion; a husband always living and glorious; a husband, who loves thee with an eternal love, that is stronger than death; whose affections are inflamed for thee in such a manner, that the water of all the seas and rivers is not able to extinguish; a husband who bears with all thine infirmities, and hath redeemed thee from all thy sins; a husband who hath not spared for thee his precious blood, that he might procure for thee the glory and happiness of his kingdom; who invites thee to his heavenly nuptials, having prepared and appointed for thee a room in the banqueting chamber, where thousands of glorified saints shall sit, and where the melodious harmony of angels shall be heard; a husband, who calls to thee, reacheth out to thee his hand, who opens his bosom to receive thee. If thou hast found any satisfaction and pleasure in the company of that person, whom God hath given thee for an assistant and mate, judge from thence, what angelic delights thou shalt meet with in the ravishing embraces of thy heavenly spouse. The most pleasant marriage days are gone as a shadow; but the day which shall bring thee

to the celestial bridegroom, shall never depart nor darken, and the heavenly contentments shall abide and continue with thee for ever, without the least distaste.

You beloved and loving children, who are yet in the bosom of a good father, or of a tender hearted mother, suffer death patiently to remove you far from them, and depart with joy to that good God, that will receive you as his children, satisfy your souls with the milk of his most blessed consolations, and will make you his heirs, and co-heirs with his son Jesus Christ; say to him as the holy prophet, *When my father and my mother shall forsake me, yet the Lord will receive me*, Isa. xlix.; Psal. xxvii. And you, fathers and mothers, that have a tender affection for your children, if death takes them out of your sight, and deprives you of the comfort of their company, grieve not as those who have no hope. For when they should be ever so accomplished, when they should always have given you pleasure and divertisement, what are all these pitiful delights that pass away in a moment, and change oftentimes into bitterness and sorrow, if compared with the eternal pleasures which we shall enjoy in the contemplation of God's glorious face, and in a familiar acquaintance with his divine wisdom? You shall not return to them, but they shall in their time go to you. So that you shall shortly see one another in the dwelling of the Father of spirits. Death separates you for a while; but the author of your life will bring you together for ever.

Finally, of what age and condition soever you be, if you perceive the breath of your life to stop, never grieve nor murmur at it. For if death separates you from yourselves, it brings you nearer to God, your chief good; and, instead of a wretched and perishing life, it will promote you to the fruition of an eternal and ever happy one.

If we had lived in the days when our Lord was on earth, there is none of us but would have looked upon it as a singular happiness and honour to have been admitted with Peter, James and John, when they went up to Mount Tabor, to be eye witnesses of our Saviour's transfiguration. A far greater honour and happiness death is endeavouring to procure you; it will usher you up to Mount Zion, it will transport you above the heavens, where you shall behold more excellent wonders, than ever the apostles beheld upon Mount Tabor. For you shall not only see this glorious Saviour whiter than snow, and brighter than the sun, but you yourselves shall be transfigured with him, and clothed with an exceeding great glory. The holy apostles saw but two pro-

phets, but you shall see all the prophets, and all the patriarchs, apostles, confessors, martyrs, the holy and blessed virgin, and in general all the saints that reign and triumph in heaven. The apostles had a sight of this glory of our Saviour, as of a flash of lightning; it continued with them but a moment; for soon after they came down from that holy mountain, and were again exposed to the same temptations as before, and besieged by the same calamities. It will be otherwise with thee, O Christian soul, thou art flying up to heaven, from whence thou shalt never descend, till the great day of the glorious resurrection of our bodies. Thou shalt not be assaulted any more by any temptations. Thou shalt have no more enemies to overcome, nor bitterness to digest. Thou art going to reap and enjoy the blessed fruits of thy Saviour's victories, and to be eternally satisfied with the celestial pleasures that are at the right hand of the God of mercies.

We are ready to conclude the apostle John was highly favoured of the Lord, when there was a view given him of the new Jerusalem. But greater is thy privilege, O Christian, at and after death! What St John saw while in this world was but in a vision; but God will discover the same to thee in reality and truth. Christ is as it were, saying to his redeemed, Come, my friends, and I will show you the magnificent and sumptuous city, the heavenly palace, with all the glorious state, and surprising splendour of my kingdom! Come, and I will display before your eyes the immense treasures and matchless crowns I have to dispose of! Come, and I will show you the pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne! Rev. xxii. 1. Come, and I will discover to you the infinite satisfactions, and eternal delights, belonging to the future state, not in mere vision or ecstacy, nor in a holy ravishment of the mind, or in any prophetic elevation of the soul, but by a real fruition, and continued contemplation of them, in a light infinitely superior to that of the sun.

Those who now suffer with Christ, shall hereafter reign with him: they that are faithful unto death, to them will he give a crown of life, and will cause them to receive a kingdom that cannot be moved, Heb. xii. 28. Jesus will unveil his lovely face, and will scatter those clouds that conceal his glory; he will cause the rays to break forth with a cheering brightness; will render his redeemed people conformable to himself; will make them happy in his presence, where there is fulness of joy, and pleasures overflowing for evermore, Psal. xvi. 11. Thus, dear Christians, you may plainly per-

ceive, that death, however dreadful and ill-favoured it may seem, yet, as David said of Ahimaaz, cometh with good tidings, and may not unfitly be compared to the chariot of fire which conveyed the good prophet Elijah to heaven.

From these intimations, we easily conclude with the wisest of men, That the day of death is better than the day of one's birth, Eccl. vii. 1. By our natural birth, we become inhabitants of a miserably wicked world; but by death, Christians are removed to the celestial paradise, a place of perfect purity and everlasting delight. Our birth exposes us to a vast variety of evils and enemies; but Christ, through death, gives to Christians a complete victory, and will make them more than conquerors. Our birth is attended with weeping and tears; the death of the believer will issue in songs of joy. Our birth brings us into the light of this world; but death lands the better part of the Christian in a purer light, that is everlasting. In consequence of our birth, we live here an animal and sensual life, of a transient continuance; but death makes way for our living a life truly pure and spiritual, which shall continue for ever. In a word, our birth casts us into the arms of death; but death despatches the immortal spirit to him with whom is the fountain of life, Psal. xxxvi. 9.

The apostle Paul accounted death to be his gain; and the primitive Christians could not approve of surviving persons afflicting themselves for the departure of believers by death, inasmuch as this was the day of their rest and deliverance, their glory and happiness. Decency upon such an occasion is worthy of regard; but these worthies were against persons clothing themselves with attire of sable hue, and carrying signs of sadness for the sake of those that are clothed in white and shining robes of glory and immortality. They considered the present life as one continued death, and looked upon death as the beginning of a real life; and agreeable hereunto, they called the annual return of that day, whereon a martyr suffered death, *the day of his nativity*. From hence proceeded the songs of praise which were usually sung to perpetuate their memories.

I need not call upon the serious reader to note the mighty difference between the death of God's people and that of the wicked; it is as great as that between light and darkness, heaven and hell. Hence, Balaam had good reason to desire the one, and dread the other; and we have all need to pray in his language, Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his, Num. xxiii. 10.

It has been already remarked in this treatise, how Adrian, one of the heathen emperors, made the following address to his soul, My little soul, my little darling, hostess and companion of my body, thou art going to wander up and down in cold, obscure and fearful places; thou shalt never delight thyself in jesting, as thou hast been wont; thou shalt never give me any more pastime. But when death dissolves this earthly tabernacle, the Christian may address the departing spirit in a different manner. O my soul, pleasant hostess, and heavenly companion of this frail body, thou canst not wander out of thy way; for thou hast a sure and faithful guide. The angels will bear thee on their wings, and convey thee to a noble palace, gloriously illuminated, and enriched with the most ravishing delights. Thou hast for ever done with sin, sorrow and grief, which have so frequently broken in upon thee in this world; nothing now remains but scenes of uninterrupted joy, with songs of praise and thanksgiving to God and to the Lamb, from the holy angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect.

How great is the glory and happiness which Christians may justly expect from their God and Saviour, who hath infinite power, mercy and goodness, and hath given his own life for theirs, which is an indisputable proof, that all his perfections are employed for their welfare! St Paul, when on his journey to Jerusalem, where he was bound and imprisoned, and from whence he was to be conveyed to Rome, there to suffer and die for his Lord and Master, his friends wept for him, and they would have dissuaded him from going; but what replied the apostle hereunto? What mean you to weep, and to break my heart? Acts xxi. 13; so, Christians, do your companions and attendants seek to dissuade you from thinking of your departure. Would they reconcile you to this world, the customs of it, and your continuance in it, say to them, What mean you, my friends! would you stop me from going to the heavenly Jerusalem, at the entrance of which, I shall cast off all the fetters and chains of mortality? When and where I shall finally leave all my sins, my sufferings and sorrows, and enter into the greatest glory with the best of company. Perhaps from hence they may be induced to say, *The will of the Lord be done.*

The Christian may moreover reply to those who discover this unseasonable concern: if your love be real and sincere, you will surely prefer my highest felicity to the small satisfaction you might find in my company and conversation in this world. Consider also, in my heavenly Father's house

and presence, every moment will furnish out to me more real joy and pleasure than I could hope for here in a thousand ages. All the pomp and splendour of this world, all its glory and state, its riches and treasures, its honours and delights, are no more, when compared with future felicity, than a few drops of water to a boundless ocean, or a flash of lightning to the rays of the sun, when it shines in its meridian brightness. And is it reasonable that your passionate fondness for me should hinder me of all this happiness?

Suppose you and I were bound and imprisoned in some dark dungeon, would you not rather behold me at some distance in the enjoyment of full liberty and delight, than that I should continue your companion under misery and confinement? Let it not be suggested, that we shall never behold each other no more; for can any Christian doubt of, or disbelieve, the declared purpose of heaven to gather the saints together? Psal. l. 5; Matt. xxiv. 31. The separation occasioned by death is but momentary; for the Prince of Life will unite us together for ever in his Father's house, whither he is gone to prepare a place for us; and this future meeting in the heavenly palace, when meditated upon by faith, may go far towards dispelling this gloomy darkness and distress of mind, which is wont to arise under a sense of separation. By language like this, surviving Christian friends may be so wrought upon, as to behold your translation into heaven with a tolerable composure of spirit.

If it happen otherwise with some Christians, who, in their departure, are attended with such whose love is blind, whose minds are weak, and their passions strong, and seem so unreasonable as to resist the appointment of heaven, and to oppose God's promoting to happiness the heirs of salvation; as it has a tendency to excite the reluctancies of nature in the dying believer, he must endeavour to overcome them by the strength of divine grace, and the assistance of the Holy Spirit. He must imitate St Peter, who, at his Lord's transfiguration, forgot his own family, with all his other enjoyments in the world, and in a transport of joy cried out, Lord, it is good for us to be here. It is truly good to be with Christ, and to behold his glory! And certain it is, if the mind is raised up to heaven, and the soul by faith can behold Jesus shining in all his glory, and surrounded with seraphic spirits, incessantly sounding his praise, this previous apprehension of the world to come, will render the Christian forgetful of the perishing pleasures and enjoyments of the present world, which the affections have been too much devoted

unto in time past. Hence, in a holy ecstacy, the Christian cries out with St Thomas, My Lord and my God ! with the church, I am sick of love; and with the holy Psalmist, Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth I desire besides thee ? &c.

In the presence of the Lord there is so much light, life and love, that the believer's meditations hereupon are peculiarly sweet and ravishing to the mind ! Indeed, the well-instructed Christian will not say with the apostle Peter, Let us build tabernacles, as knowing, when he is arrived at this enjoyment of Jesus, which we are now treating of, he is no longer to live the life of a sojourner, or that of a soldier ; he will see with the eye of faith, a palace prepared before time began, and will aspire after the possession of it ; will attend with pleasure to that sovereign command, Open ye the gates, that the righteous may enter in ; and will rejoice in hope of that entrance which shall be administered abundantly, Isaiah xxvi. 2; 2 Pet. i. 11.

My Christian friends, shall the poor Pagans, who never tasted of the heavenly gift, who were never partakers of the Holy Ghost, the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; shall the Heathen, I say, who had no such hope, and were without God in the world, meet death with courage; and will you, with all your superior advantages about you, the foretastes of happiness, and the foreseen beams of glory breaking forth, still hesitate concerning your departure from this world ? Shall a Seneca, who had no other light to direct him than that of nature, and nothing better to support him than his own philosophy, cheerfully submit to death, and comfort his friends weeping around him ; and shall Christians, who have been trained up under the tuition of eternal wisdom, shudder at the thought of their departure ! Is it possible that such who embrace by faith the glories and felicities prepared for them in a future life, should not be able to look upon death with courage and resolution ; yea, to leave the world with expressions of joy ?

Shall a Socrates cheerfully drink up the poisonous potion which was prepared for him ? And shall the Christian, animated by the Spirit of God, interested in the precious promises, and who has received the earnest of the heavenly inheritance, shrink under the apprehensions of sufferings and death ? If there be any thing bitter and distasteful in thy cup, O Christian, consider, it bears no comparison with that which Christ drank for thee ; nay, suppose it were poisonous, yet thou hast proper and powerful antidotes prepared.

Remember, thou art going to drink for ever, of the water of life in the heavenly kingdom, where the first taste of the pure stream will remove all thy maladies, and make thee forget all past complaints. When death enters into the houses of Christians, it meanly becomes such to abandon themselves to sorrow, since they have an interest in Christ, who was crucified, but is now reigning and triumphing in heaven, and will there receive his redeemed ones to himself.

Moreover, since so many persons of different ages, sexes and circumstances in life, have desired death, only to be free from earthly evils and calamities; hath not the Christian infinitely greater reason to desire death (when it shall please the Almighty), that he may enjoy the happy advantages of the heavenly life? How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures; for with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light, Psal. xxxvi. 7, 8, 9.

If, agreeable to our profession, we know the Lord; if we passionately desire to enjoy angelical delights, and to taste of those divine pleasures which proceed from the heavenly throne, should we not be induced hereby to use the expressions of the Psalmist, As the heart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God, Psal. xlii. 1. O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is, Psal. lxiii. 1. How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts? My soul longeth, yea even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God! Psal. lxxxiv. 1, 2.

O believer, how vastly great is the difference between the earthly Jerusalem, which David so earnestly desired should be restored, and the heavenly city, into which thy God will receive thee! What comparison is there between the little stream of Shiloh, and the capacious river of the celestial paradise? What a vast disproportion between the material tabernacle, the mercy-seat covered with gold, upon which the figured cherubims stretched their wings, and the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man: Jesus Christ the true ark of the covenant, containing all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, in whose sacred person dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and in whose presence the *real seraphims* vail their faces with their wings? Heb.

viii. 2; Col. ii. 3, 9; Isa. vi. 2, 3. How contemptible were all the oblations and offerings of the Israelites, in comparison of the spiritual sacrifices offered by the saints with holy fervour and charity, which are always acceptable to God by Jesus Christ? 1 Pet. ii. 5.

Now, consider, if there be this difference between the times and the sacrifices of the law, and those of the gospel here on earth, how infinitely greater is the difference between earth and heaven! If David accounted it a happiness to be a door-keeper in the house of God below; what superior happiness will the Christian enjoy, when received into celestial and everlasting habitations! The Holy Jesus hath made this gracious promise, Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out, Rev. iii. 12. If the Levites and others, praising God, was so spiritually entertaining to the saints of old, how much more will the harmonious hymns of heaven be so, when sounded by the celestial choir, singing the song of Moses and of the Lamb!

When the shepherds heard but a few notes of the angel's song of praise to God at the Redeemer's birth, they were filled with joy, and cheerfully left their flocks to seek the Saviour, even in his humble state, wrapt in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger; and shall the spirits of God's children reluctantly leave this lower world to dwell with this Jesus, now exalted at the Father's right hand; and so much as seem unwilling to join with thousands of angels that surround the throne, and are incessantly praising him who sitteth upon it?

Zaccheus ascended a sycamore tree to obtain a sight of Jesus as he passed by in his state of abasement; should not the Christian be in earnest to soar above the heavens to see this Lord, and be for ever with him in his glorious elevation? Now, salvation and joy does enter into the houses and hearts where Christ vouchsafes his gracious visits; but hereafter, when the saints arrive at that Redeemer's palace, they will enter into the joy and glory of their Lord.

We account highly of Jacob's happiness in Bethel, as visited of God there, Gen. xxviii. 12, 20; but more happy is the soul of the Christian in this after state; and with much more reason may such a one say, This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven, ver. 17. The holy patriarch saw heaven opened, but was not then admitted thereinto; but at death heaven is opened to receive the spirits of the redeemed, there to dwell for ever. Jacob saw

the angels of God ascending and descending upon the ladder, while he was left below ; but at death the angels assist and secure the departing spirit's assent to heaven by Jesus Christ, the true spiritual ladder. Jacob beheld the Lord standing above this ladder, but was himself, after this, to go to Padan-Aram, to encounter many difficulties in the service of Laban, to meet with unkind treatment from him, to face his brother Esau, and to wrestle with the Almighty ; whereas the Christian, at his departure, is happily arrived at the end of his race, the last period of his pilgrimage ; has done with difficulties of every kind ; frailties and fears will be known no more, but an invariable scene of felicity succeed for ever.

Moses was passionately desirous that God would show to him his glory, Exod. xxxiii. 18 ; and should not the Christian be desirous of this sight ? Where this desire is found, it shall in due time be fully gratified : for God will guide with his counsel, and afterwards receive his to glory; he will show them the path of life, and bring them into his presence, where there is fulness of joy ; he will abundantly satisfy them with the fatness of his house, and cause them to drink of the river of his pleasures, Psal. lxxiii. 24 ; xvi. 11 ; xxxvi. 8.

If the Christian's faith and assurance were but proportionate to heaven's glory and happiness, with what ecstacy of joy would we leave this world to possess the heavenly inheritance purchased by Jesus Christ ! Let me farther ask, Why should the Christian fear, or his faith be wanting ? When Jonathan had tasted a little honey, his eyes were enlightened, 1 Sam. xiv. 29 ; so the believer, having tasted of that honey which is found in the rock of Christ, his understanding is enlightened also, which may relieve under the apprehensions of death, and cause the Christian not barely to expect God's salvation, but to rejoice in the views of it, and declare with David, I was glad when they said unto me, come let us go up to the house of the Lord, Psal. cxxii. 1, this upper and better house of our heavenly Father.

In this frame of Spirit the Christian may not only look for, expect with patience, and embrace with joy, the tidings of this glorious salvation, but be hasting unto the coming of the day of God (2 Pet. iii. 12), when he shall behold his heavenly Father's face, delightfully dwell in his presence, and drink for ever of the water of life at the fountain head. Joseph, when called to the royal palace, hastily went out of prison, and prepared himself to stand before Pharaoh (Gen. xli. 14) ; and hath not the believing soul much greater rea-

son to make haste in its preparation to leave the prison of the body, to ascend to the heavenly palace, to appear in the presence of the King of Kings, and be advanced to the highest honours? Such honours indeed as infinitely excel all the pomp and pageantry of the princes of this world!

Bartimeus readily cast away his garment to come to Jesus with the greater speed when called by him, Mark x. 50; and should not the spirit of a Christian willingly leave this body (which is but like a troublesome garment), and repair to Christ the Saviour, to be cured of all diseases, the remains of spiritual darkness, and to dwell in light inaccessible to the mortal body? 1 Tim. vi. 16; glorious light, in which the righteous shall shine as the stars, for ever and ever, Dan. xii. 3. Let the believing spirit, then, willingly cast off this spotted garment of the flesh, in order to be clothed with light and glory. The prophet Elijah let fall his mantle, and was surrounded with a celestial splendour; so the Christian, when he hath cast off this frail body, will be happily encompassed with heavenly flames, in which he will ascend to heaven, and bear some likeness to that God who covereth himself with light as with a garment.

Joshua, the high priest, was clad with filthy garments, but command was given to those in waiting, Take away the filthy garments from him; I will clothe thee with change of raiment; let them set a fair mitre upon his head, Zech. iii. 4, 5. This does not unaptly represent the Christian's case, whose body is oppressed by labour, attended with pains, who bears about him the relics of the old man; but God calls, as it were, from his heavenly sanctuary, in this language: Take away from him this overworn, or at best, defiled garment, and clothe him with sacred ornaments, proper to the royal priesthood; array him in fine linen, clean and white (the ephod of righteousness); place an incorruptible crown upon his head, and put a golden vial into his hand, that he may offer up for ever the most pleasing perfumes, in company with the glorious and glorified ones who are under the heavenly altar.

If, after this, the Christian can yet doubt of the certain felicity and glory of such who die in the Lord, let him well attend to what St Paul hath said, who was himself caught up into the third heaven, where he both heard and saw things unutterable, 2 Cor. xii. 1, 4; and we know, says he, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be

clothed upon with our house which is from heaven, &c. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burthened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life, 2 Cor. v. 1, 2, 4. And to what is said elsewhere, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth ; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them, Rev. xiv. 13.

It were to be wished we had some other word than that of death, by which to express the happy change that Christians make when they leave this miserable world. It is with small propriety a person can be said to die when he leaves an uncertain world filled with vanity and vexation, and enters into another that abides for ever, where all felicity does abound ; when he exchanges labour for rest, war for peace, pain for pleasure, and sorrow for joy.

Christian, revolve over in thy mind thy spiritual beginning and thy happy end ; consider well, what thou art, from whence thou proceedest, and whither thou goest. The renewed soul is of a celestial and immortal nature, a beam of glory, nay, the image of the Creator. It is pure without spot or blemish, as washed in the blood of the Lamb, and sanctified by the Spirit of God : hereby the nobler part is fitted and disposed to enter into the holy city, and the fruition of eternal glory. Such have fought a good fight, have finished their course, have kept the faith ; and there is laid up for them a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will then assuredly give unto them.

Go then, O believing soul, with joy and gladness to the great God, who calls thee, and to the precious Mediator, who is ready to embrace and receive thee : go cheerfully into the glorious company of angels and happy spirits, to be arrayed like them, with robes of light, and wear the immortal crown which the King of glory has provided for thee : go and stay thy hunger with the bread of life, and allay thy thirst with the crystal stream of the pure river of the water of life, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb. Rev. xxii. 1 ; go and behold the amiable face of the Father of lights, be farther transformed into his glorious image, and be for ever happy in the divine resemblance.

O Christian, seest thou not the heavens opened, and the son of man standing at the right hand of God ready to receive thy spirit into his glorious rest ? Seest thou not the holy angels coming to transport thee from this wretched world ? Art thou not already encompassed about with hea-

venly guards? Dost thou not relish the sweetness of paradise? Is not heaven begun in thy heart? Canst thou not hear the melody of glorified spirits in their hymns of praise? Dost thou not know that joyful voice sounding in thine ear, Verily I say unto thee, this day shalt thou be with me in paradise. Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world: well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord.

Does not the Christian feel himself raised above all earthly things, and flying upon the wings of faith and love to the very throne of glory? Can he not, under these meditations, cast himself into the arms of God, and the bosom of Jesus, there to rest for ever in the full enjoyment of those good things which eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, but which yet God hath certainly prepared for them that love him?

XXVII.

Prayer and Meditation of a Christian, whose spirit is prepared by grace to leave the body, and is comforted with the thought and hope of the after state.

O Almighty God! the alone author of my being, and the Sovereign Lord of my life; thou seest all the secret motions and dispositions of my spiritual part; thou knowest that I have wholly resigned myself into thy hands, to be formed and fitted for thee for all thy pleasure, then would I say, *Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth;* here I am, and I delight to do thy will, O God. As the Israelites waited for thy order, before they removed their camp; so I am waiting for thy command to leave this earthly tabernacle; and as the golden cherubs were always upon their feet, with their wings stretched out, and their faces towards the mercy-seat; in like manner, I would always be in a fit posture to take my flight to the true mercy-seat (to the blessed Jesus, who is the propitiation for my sins), whenever it shall please thee to put forth thy hand to deliver me from all my troubles, and the dark night of present afflictions. I am as heartily disposed to relinquish the filthy rags of my own righteousness, and to leave this mantle of the flesh behind, as were Elijah, or Bartimeus, to leave theirs; that so I might ascend, as in a chariot of fire, to the heavenly state, and dwell with Jesus, who is

the light and glory of it. I am not concerned that I must quit this earthly tabernacle ; for thou hast made me meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Let my body return to the earth as it was, since I have hope, through grace, my spirit (that better, that immortal part) will return to my God, who gave it. I doubt not its gracious reception with thee, my Saviour, since thou hast promised a crown of rest and life to all who are faithful unto death, and continue persevering in thy faith and fear. The rewards of immortality are sure to such as fight under thy banner against sin, Satan and the world. Through thy power and favour I have already vanquished these enemies of my salvation, and have now no other to contend with, but the last enemy, death; and by thy grace, I hope here to conquer. Strengthen me, O Lord, by thy Holy Spirit, hereunto, and give me clear views of, and an easy passage unto thy eternal kingdom and glory. O my God! I trust in thy fatherly goodness, and unchangeable affection, together with the precious promises thou hast made, and the near relation thou hast taken me in unto thyself: thy faithfulness stands fast for evermore ; and thou hast said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee; send thy good angels at the hour of death, and give them charge to carry my departing spirit to the realms of light, and introduce me into the heavenly kingdom, where I shall see thy salvation in its glory. I long to be with thee in thy heavenly Jerusalem, to enter thine holy sanctuary, and to join with the blessed society who minister before thy throne. I feel the effects of thy grace in the separation of my affections from the world, and the fixing of my thoughts and hopes on thee, my God ; receive me into thy magnificent palace, admit me to dwell in thy presence, and to behold the face of my glorified Redeemer. Speak, O Lord, to my soul, in language answerable to its longings ; and in the time of my departure, let me hear these comfortable words, This day shalt thou be with me in paradise. I am sensible, that in thy presence there is joy, peace and happiness, in perfection ; I have already the foretastes of heavenly pleasure ; and am persuaded they exceed all we can say or think. I see, as it were, the heavens opened, and my Lord Jesus ready to embrace me. Into thy hands I commit my spirit, for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth ! *Amen.*

CHAPTER XXIII.

The eleventh Consolation. The glorious resurrection of our bodies.

When God created the angels, he made them of a nature altogether spiritual and heavenly, and that hath no affinity with matter. I know very well, that these blessed spirits have sometimes appeared in human bodies, as to the ancient patriarchs. But those were bodies formed by God after an extraordinary and miraculous manner; nor were the angels in them, as the human soul is in the body which it informs and animates, but only as the pilot is in the ship which he governs. Therefore, as soon as they had accomplished the work about which they were employed by God, they left those bodies without the least prejudice, as the pilot goes out of the ship, when he hath brought it to the desired haven. All the happiness of these glorious spirits consists in this, that God hath confirmed them in his grace and love, and hath admitted them for ever to the contemplation of his face. It is not so with our souls; for although they are of a spiritual and heavenly nature, God hath not created them to be alone and separate from all matter, but to live in the pleasing company of these elemental bodies, which he hath fashioned in the most wonderful manner. When he creates a human soul, and conveys it into an organized body, it is not that it should be there as water in a vessel, or as a king in his palace; it lives not there as an assisting form, or as the external cause of the body's operations; but it is united to it by a much stricter union, and serves as an essential form. It is the principle of our life, the internal cause of motion, sense and understanding. So that, properly speaking, man is neither of a pure spiritual nature, as the celestial intelligences, nor a simple body, as the sun and stars. Therefore, if our soul desires to depart out of this earthly tabernacle, it is not out of any hatred that we bear to it, considered in itself, and in its own nature: For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, Eph. v. 29; but by accident, and because of the vanity and corruption to which sin hath made us subject, Rom. viii., we desire to de-

part, to go to a place where righteousness and true holiness reign, and to be with the Lord Jesus Christ, and to dwell in his presence, Phil. i. It is therefore a self-evident truth, that unless the body partakes of the same happiness as the soul, man cannot be said to be absolutely and perfectly happy. I confess, it is a great joy for us to know, that when our earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, we shall be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven, 2 Cor. v., whither we shall go to behold the face of the Father of lights. But this holy joy is dashed with sorrow, this heavenly sweetness is mingled with bitterness, when we consider the lamentable estate of our poor body, abandoned to the earth, and to worms; for it must be a most hateful sight to see that body rotting, and turning to ashes, that was not only our pavilion, our palace, but also a dear loved part of us. Therefore, that our joy may be perfect and full, we must comfort ourselves with this sweet and pleasing reflection, that the ruin and desolation which we deplore will not be for ever; but that, as our body is pulled down by death, it shall one day be rebuilt by the resurrection.

This is one of the noblest and most excellent mysteries of the Christian religion, and one of its most glorious advantages. The wisdom of the world, with all its boasted lights, and the heathen philosophy, with all its rare subtleties, could never attain to the knowledge of this saving and comfortable doctrine. Accordingly we find, that St Paul, when he stood in the midst of Mars-hill, and preached to the learned Athenians, was heard with admiration, until he began to speak of the resurrection of the dead; but as soon as he opened his mouth upon that subject, they mocked him, Acts xvii. 32.

But notwithstanding human reason cannot perceive this glorious mystery, while it remains in the profound darkness of natural ignorance; yet as soon as it is enlightened with the light of grace, it discovers all its rich beauties, and acknowledges the justice and necessity of it.

First. Since rewards and punishments ought to bear a proportion to him who punishes and rewards, we must of necessity believe the resurrection of the body, otherwise the pains of the one could not be extreme, nor the happiness of the other absolute and perfect.

Secondly. As, when a person is executed for high treason, men are wont to fasten to the gibbet, or to burn in the fire, the arms or instruments, with which he had assaulted or offended his prince; in the same manner, the bodies of the

wicked and profane, and, in a word of all those that commit treason against God's divine Majesty, ought to be punished with their souls eternally in hell-fire, because they have been the instruments employed in offending their Creator.

Thirdly. The body is not only the instrument which the wicked man makes use of to offend against God, but it is also the spur and goad which hurries him on to sin; for its humours irritate, inflame, and excite him to evil actions. For example, its sanguine constitution makes him luxurious, and inclines him to all the filthiness of the flesh; its choler drives him to violence and fury; and its melancholy prompts him to the most horrid and diabolical crimes. So that if the adviser and encourager of any notorious villany is to be punished as well as the actor, it belongs to God's justice to inflict upon the body, as well as upon the soul, eternal punishments.

Fourthly. To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven, Eccl. iii. 1. As the bodies of the wicked and reprobate have received their good things, and their pleasure in this life, so they must receive their pains and torments in that which is to come, Luke xvi. 25.

Fifthly. But to consider those reasons, which have a relation to the faithful, and which are the pillars and foundation of our faith and hope, Jesus Christ is no less powerful to save us, than Adam was to destroy us. Now, Adam hath lost both soul and body; therefore Jesus Christ must needs save and redeem both the one and the other, and consequently the body must rise again, that it may partake of the salvation and redemption.

Sixthly. As we have borne the image of the first man which is of the earth, earthly; we shall also bear the image of the second man, which is the Lord from heaven, 1 Cor. xv. 47, 49. Now, we bear not this glorious image during the course of this life; therefore we must bear it, in that which is to come.

Seventhly. God hath not made a covenant with only one part of a man, but with the whole man, as he is composed of soul and body; therefore the body must needs rise again, that it may partake of the glory and happiness which are promised to us by this holy and divine covenant.

Eighthly. God is not only called the Father of spirits, Heb. xii. 9, and the God of the spirits of all flesh, Numb. xvi. 22; but he styles himself in general, the God of Abraham, and of his seed, Gen. xvii. 7. He is not only the

God of the soul, or the God of the body alone, but he is the God of the entire person of believers. Whence it necessarily follows, that the bodies of such as are dead are not utterly destroyed, but that God shall raise them up again. With this argument Christ stopped the mouths of the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection: as touching the resurrection of the dead, said he, Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you, by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, Matt. xxii. 31, 32; Exod. iii. 6.

Ninthly. God hath adopted us by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, Eph. i, to make us heirs of his kingdom, and joint-heirs with his Son, Rom. viii. 17. From hence we may gather an assured hope of the resurrection; for when this Father of mercies shall behold our bodies lying in the dust, he will take compassion upon them, and will say, These are the bodies of my children, the members of my dear Son; it is not just that I leave them for ever in this state of ignominy and corruption, nor will my Fatherly tenderness towards them suffer it. It was doubtless this consideration that caused the apostle to call the redemption of our bodies by the name of adoption; for by that he assures us, that God will bring out of their graves the bodies of all them whom he hath adopted; and that our resurrection is the effect, and necessary consequence of our adoption. Finally, our Saviour himself speaks of it as the same thing, to be the child of God, and the child of the resurrection, Luke xx. 36.

Tenthly. Death, considered in itself, as it is in its own nature, is the wages of sin, Rom. vi. 23, and the punishment of our crimes. Now, since Jesus Christ hath paid these wages for us, and made satisfaction for our sins, nailed them to his cross, it follows that death, with respect to believers, is to be destroyed, and consequently that their bodies must needs rise again.

Eleventhly. St Paul tells us that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the body, Eph. v. 23. Now the mystical body of this great God and Saviour, consists not only in the infinite number of souls which he hath purchased, but also in the assembly of all those bodies that have been the companions of these blessed souls; therefore, as he hath saved our souls from the spiritual death and eternal damnation, he must also save our bodies from the corporal death, and ransom them from the power of the grave.

Twelfthly. If death was to detain our bodies for ever in the grave, it could not be said, properly speaking, that our Saviour hath swallowed up death in victory, 1 Cor. xv. 54, and that he is the destruction of the grave, Hosea. xiii. 14, since death and the grave would remain victorious, and triumph for ever over these miserable bodies.

Thirteenthly. Our Saviour hath suffered both in his body and soul, and by that means hath fully purchased to himself, both our souls and bodies, according to the apostle's excellent saying, Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's, 1 Cor. vi. 20. Hence it follows, that if our bodies were to remain for ever under the empire of death, this glorious Saviour would be defrauded of part of that which he hath purchased by the infinite merit of his sufferings.

Fourteenthly. The Holy Ghost hath sanctified our bodies, and made them his temples, as St Paul expressly teacheth us in these divine words, Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 1 Cor. iii. 16. From hence the resurrection of the body follows as a necessary consequence? For can we imagine that God will suffer the temple of his holiness to lie in perpetual ruin and desolation? Will he not rebuild the pavilion of his glory, cast down by death?

Fifteenthly. God hath predestinated us to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren, Rom. viii. 29. Now the soul and body of this well-beloved of the Father, that were separated by death, have been united again by the resurrection, and received into heaven: therefore our souls, that depart out of this world to enter into paradise, must return again to join their bodies, that we may be received up into heaven both in soul and body. All the difference between us and our triumphant captain is, that this precious body neither was, nor could be, subject to corruption, because of his glory, and the personal union of his humanity with the Godhead: whereas the most part of all other bodies suffer corruption, and moulder into dust.

Sixteenthly. We have the same Holy Spirit and divine virtue dwelling in us, though not in an equal measure or degree, which was in our Lord Jesus Christ, and was the efficient cause of his resurrection: whence it follows, that it will produce in us the same effect, and also raise our bodies from the grave. The apostle makes use of this argument in the 8th chapter of the Romans, If the Spirit of him that

raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raiseth up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you, ver. 11.

Seventeenthly. A dead body revived upon touching the bones of the prophet Elisha, 2 Kings xiii. 21; how much greater reason have we to hope for the resurrection of our bodies, since we not only touch Jesus Christ, dead and risen again, but are become members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones! Eph. v. 30. I am, saith he, the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die, John xi. 25, 26.

Eighteenthly. God hath sealed our bodies with his own signet; he hath imprinted upon them the marks of his love, and hath given them visible and palpable assurances of their future blessedness. Under the Old Testament, believers bore the seal of God's covenant in their flesh; for circumcision was the seal of their righteousness, that is by faith, Rom. iv. 11, and of the hope of a blessed immortality. They also eat the flesh of the paschal lamb, which was a type of Jesus Christ, the true Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world, John i. 29. Likewise, under the new covenant God consecrates our bodies to himself by the waters of baptism, and assures them of the glorious resurrection by the bread and wine of the Lord's supper. For if by eating this bread, and drinking this wine, we eat and drink spiritually the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ, it is an infallible assurance, that this divine Saviour will raise us up again at the last day, as he himself promiseth, Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day, John vi. 54.

Nineteenthly. The body of a believer partakes of the sufferings of Christ; it endures many evils for the profession of his holy name, and it is often exposed to the most cruel and shameful torments; therefore it is but just, that it should also partake of his triumphs, glory, and eternal happiness: For it is a faithful saying; if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him, 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12. We always bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body, 2 Cor. iv. 10.

Twentiethly. God makes nothing in vain; he bestows upon us no useless desires; but God hath kindled in us an earnest longing to have this wretched body delivered from the misery and corruption, unto which sin hath brought it

into subjection, and to behold it clothed with glory and immortality. This is what the apostle represents to us in a most pathetic manner, in the 8th chapter of the Romans; for having told us, That the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope; because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God; he adds, For we know, that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now; and not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body, ver. 20, 21, 22, 23.

Lastly. Since whatever God hath appointed in his eternal counsel, must be fulfilled in time, and all things in the world attain those ends for which he made them; and since he created our souls not to be alone, but to live in the company and fellowship of the body; it follows, that this body, which is cast down by death, must needs be raised again at the resurrection, that the soul may return to it, and dwell with it for ever.

To maintain that the resurrection of the body is impossible, is the most extravagant Atheism: it is impudently denying the infinite power of God, and the sacred history of the world's creation. For since things are in their operations as they are in their natures, whoever confesses a God, whose being is infinite, must of necessity acknowledge him to have a power adequate to that being; and consequently, that this Almighty God may, without difficulty, raise the dead. If thou believest that God calleth those things which be not, as though they were, Rom. iv. 17, why canst thou not believe, that this same God, will also call the things that have been already, to restore to them that being which they had before received from his Almighty hand? If thou believest that God fashioned Eve out of one of Adam's ribs, that he made Adam of the dust, and that he created that dust out of nothing, canst thou not as readily believe, that God is able, in the day of the resurrection, to build again thy body of that dust into which it is reduced by death? If thou believest that God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life, that he created thy soul, and infused it into thy body, where it never was before, how canst thou call in question his power of returning, one day, the same soul into the same body, where it formerly made its abode? In short, if thou believest that the Spirit of God, by moving upon the face of

the waters, hath caused so many beautiful and noble creatures to appear, and that he made the light to shine out of darkness, canst thou not be persuaded, that this Holy Spirit can likewise display his power among the graves, and that he can bring thy body out of the dark shadows of death into the light of the living?

It is seen, every day, that a new house is erected out of the materials of an old building; and canst thou think it strange, that the Sovereign Architect, who by his word alone built the great world, should gather together all the old materials of this little world, to make a new building full of grace and beauty! The founder can restore his broken image, though it be reduced to dust; and shall not God be able to restore man, created in his own image, after his likeness, to his primitive estate? In a word, let the difficulty appear ever so great, remember, Christian soul, what the angel Gabriel told the blessed virgin, With God nothing shall be impossible, Luke i. 37.

I know very well it is a maxim in philosophy, from privation of the habit there is no return; that is to say, when once we are deprived of any natural faculty, it is never to be recovered. But this maxim is shamefully abused, when brought by the profane to oppose the doctrine of the resurrection. With respect to natural and secondary causes, it is certainly true; for the natural faculties, being once lost, can never be recovered by human means. When the sight, for example, is totally extinguished, it cannot be lighted up a second time at the fire of nature; and when a man is dead, it is not possible for all the creatures in the world to restore him to life. But nothing is able to limit the power of an infinite agent. He that formed the eye, Psal. xciv. 9, in whom we live, and move, and have our being, Acts xvii. 28, cannot he open the eyes of a man born blind, and restore life to a dead corpse? John ix. This same philosophy, from which they fetch their maxims, openly declares, *That God can do all things that imply no contradiction.* Now there is no contradiction in affirming, that God can restore life to him that hath lost it; and that what is thrown down by death, shall be built again by the resurrection.

To the end this resurrection of our bodies may appear less strange, God hath been pleased to give so many images and types of it in nature. I am persuaded, Christian souls, that you will not be displeased, if I set before your eyes some of the chief.

1. As when the sun goes down, and the earth is covered

with the dark shades of night, man's declining, and the darkness of the grave is represented ; so when this king of the stars rises, and ushers in the day, there is a beautiful and perfect image of the resurrection.

2. When the moon loses all her light and splendour, which she borrows from the sun, and covers herself with a veil of darkness, it is the image of death, and represents to us that veil which it draws over our eyes ; but when, by reason of the sun's aspect, it resumes its former brightness and glory, it discovers to us, in some measure, that which shall happen to our bodies, when the Sun of Righteousness shall dart upon them the rays of his countenance.

3. Spring, summer and autumn, pass away successively, and winter represents to us the horrors of the grave ; but when the sun begins again his race, and clothes the earth with new verdures, we have a most lively picture of the resurrection.

4. The trees, that are in winter without flowers, fruit or leaves, discovers to us the most hideous and frightful aspect of death, that strips man's body of every thing that is beautiful and charming. But when the same trees flourish again, and are adorned with fresh leaves and fruit, they put us in mind of the blessed resurrection of our bodies.

5. The seeds that corrupt and perish in the earth, are a lively image of the body's corruption and perishing in the grave ; but when these seeds appear above ground and flourish, they admirably well express to us the blessed state of our bodies rising again to new life and new beauty. This similitude the Son of God himself recommends to us, *Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone : but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit*, John xii. 24 ; and the apostle St Paul insists at large upon this comparison ; whence he takes occasion to cry out against the stupidity of those who will not believe that a dead body can be restored to life, *Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die*, 1 Cor. xv. 36.

6. What is still more wonderful, there are certain plants which rise again out of their own ashes. For example, if you burn mug-wort, and cast the ashes upon the earth, you shall see the same herb grow again, as hath been found by the experience of many. The same is reported of a kind of palm-tree ; and because in the Greek tongue the same word signifies both a palm and a phœnix, this experiment hath given occasion to the fable of the phœnix, a bird that is said to revive again out of its own marrow and ashes. Who can

deny but that this is an excellent image of the resurrection of our bodies?

7. There are also several insects that represent to us death and the resurrection; as the silk-worms, for when these little creatures have finished their work, and spun out that silk of which the robes and stately ornaments of kings and princes are made, they bury themselves in a tomb of their own raising, after which they become like to a small bean, under whose skin a white butterfly is formed. The same is observed of the catterpillars; for when they seem to be more than dead, they creep out of their little sepulchres in the form of butterflies, of such various and rich colours, that they charm the beholder; insomuch, that many curious persons preserve them in their cabinets, among their choicest rarities.

8. Among the beasts also, some seem to be dead for several months of the year, being without sense or motion, but afterwards they awake, or rather, they begin to live again, and to move about as before.

9. But we need go no farther than ourselves to find an image of death, and of the resurrection. For is there any thing that can represent death more perfectly than our sleep, that stupifies our senses, puts a stop to the functions of the mind, and restrains our most active faculties, insomuch that we have eyes without seeing, ears without hearing, a nose that cannot smell, and a body without feeling? On the contrary, when a person comes to awake, to open his eyes, to move and to act, what can be a more lively image of the resurrection?

I might likewise add to these images of death and the resurrection, the several changes and revolutions that happen to the states and empires of the world. For sometimes they appear as dead and buried, and then they rise again from their ruins, and break forth from their obscurity, as by a glorious resurrection. But I rather choose to consider only those types of them which are to be found in the church of God.

1. Noah and his family (in whom the whole church of God at that time was comprehended) remained in the ark as in a floating coffin, the space of one hundred and fifty days; but after the deluge, God commanded them to come out of the ark. In the same manner, when our bodies shall have lain in the grave so many years or ages, as God in his wisdom hath appointed, he will bring them from thence by his infinite power, and will say to us all, *Come forth to judgment.*

2. The children of Israel went down into Egypt and dwelt

there about two hundred years, as in a kind of sepulchre; but God delivered them at length, and brought them again into the land of Canaan, as by a blessed resurrection.

3. The Red Sea, into which this people entered, and in which Pharaoh was swallowed with all his host, is likewise a lively image of the grave, and the miraculous power which God employed to cause his people to pass through this dreadful sea, and to bring them out of its depths, shows to the blindest understanding, that omnipotence which God will one day manifest in bringing us out of the depths of death, that we may sing the song of Moses, and the song of the Lamb.

4. When the ark of the covenant was taken captive by the Philistines, and shut up in the house of Dagon, it was a type of our body, which God hath chosen for his ark, and which must remain for a season under the empire of death, as it were in Satan's prison. But the Philistines sending back this ark, and the children of Israel receiving it with shouts of joy, is an express representation of that which shall happen to the body, when God shall compel death to open all its prisons, and release all its prisoners, to the great joy of all the inhabitants of the celestial Canaan.

5. Babylon, where the church of Israel remained captive seventy years, is also a symbolical representation of the grave, where our miserable bodies are to continue as it were in captivity. Hence, by a beautiful figure, the prophet styles it a pit wherein is no water, Zech. ix. 11. But the deliverance of Israel from the Babylonish captivity, is a glorious type of our resurrection: therefore the holy men of God in speaking of it, use such images as have a respect to the resurrection of the body, Isa. xxvi.

6. Solomon's temple, that was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, and lay many years in ruin and desolation, is another type of the bodies of believers destroyed by the devil, and remaining for a time in the dust: but the Jews returning from Babylon, their rearing up the walls of the temple, and building it again, represents to us the resurrection of our bodies, the temples of the living God. Our Saviour himself had an eye to this allusion, when he said to the Jews, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up; for his beloved disciple expressly tells us, That he spake of the temple of his body, John ii. 19, 21.

7. You may find types and images of the same thing in the persons of many of the faithful, as in Joseph, Daniel and Jonah. For as the prison of Egypt, the lion's den, and the

whale's belly, represent the grave; so Pharaoh's sending and fetching Joseph out of prison, Darius's causing Daniel to be taken out of the lion's den, and God's commanding the whale to vomit out Jonah upon the dry land, are beautiful images of the resurrection.

8. But among all the types in the Old Testament by which a resurrection is figured out to us, there is none more express than that in the 37th chapter of Ezekiel. That the children of Israel might not question the power of God to deliver them from the Babylonish captivity; he set before the eyes of his prophet the resurrection from the dead. He carried him into an open valley full of dry bones; but at God's command these bones came together, bone to his bone; in an instant the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them above; a spirit breathed from the four winds upon these slain, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

But God hath not only pointed out the resurrection by many illustrious types and figures, he hath likewise expressly foretold it by his holy prophets. Isaiah speaks of it in a most exalted manner: Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise: awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead, Isa. xxvi. 19, and nothing can be more clear than the prophecy of the prophet Daniel, And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt, chap. xii. 2.

To witness their hopes of a blessed resurrection, the patriarchs were very careful of their tombs. Abraham, the father of the faithful, had no inheritance in the land of Canaan; yet he was very desirous to buy a burying-place for himself and family, Gen. xxiii. When Jacob lay upon his death-bed, he commanded his son Joseph, saying, Deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt; but I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying-place, Gen. xlvii. 29, 30. And when Joseph was ready to yield up his soul unto God, he took an oath of his brethren, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence, Gen. l. 25.

All the faithful of the Old Testament have openly declared their expectations of this glorious resurrection from the dead. Witness this remarkable passage of Job: I know that my

Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, chap. xix. 25, 26, 27; and these excellent words of David, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness, Psal. xvii. 15.

Those blessed martyrs mentioned in the second book of Maccabees, were well instructed in this school; and hence they derived the courage to offer their bodies so cheerfully to death, and the most exquisite tortures. With what a holy boldness does one of them speak to king Antiochus, the most cruel of all tyrants, who would have forced him to violate the law of the Lord his God? Thou like a fury takest us out of this present life, but the King of the world shall raise us up, who have died for his laws, unto everlasting life, chap. vii. 9. Another, animated with a holy zeal, and a heroic courage, puts out his tongue, and holds forth his hands to be cut off, saying, These I had from heaven; and for his law I despise them; and from him I hope to receive them again, ver. 11. A third, despising the tyrant's threats and promises, expired with this beautiful sentence, It is good, being put to death by men, to look for hope from God, to be raised up again by him, ver. 14. But nothing appears more admirable than the mother of these illustrious children, when speaking to the seventh, the youngest of all, she uses these words; I cannot tell how you came into my womb; for I neither gave you breath nor life, neither was it I that formed the members of every one of you: but doubtless the Creator of the world, who formed the generation of man, and found out the beginning of all things, will also of his own mercy give you breath and life again, as you now regard not your ownselves for his laws' sake, ver. 22, 23.

Martha, the sister of Lazarus, was well acquainted with this comfortable doctrine, as appears from what she says to our Saviour, I know that my brother shall rise again in the resurrection, at the last day, John xi. 24; and the Pharisees themselves made open profession to believe the resurrection from the dead, in which they were contrary to the Sadducees, who denied both the resurrection of the body, and the immortality of the soul: therefore when St Paul was to answer before the Jews' tribunal, where the one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he divides them by crying out, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; of the hope and resurrection of the dead am I called in question? Acts

xxiii. 6. And when he makes his apology before Felix, the governor, he speaks in this manner, After the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets; and have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust, Acts xxiv. 14, 15.

As the Jews have forsaken God, so God hath forsaken them, and given them over to a reprobate sense. For setting aside the infinite merits of the death and passion of Jesus Christ, they vainly persuade themselves, that their sins are expiated by their own deaths; notwithstanding the grievous corruptions that have crept into their doctrines, they die in hopes one day to rise again. For this reason, they carefully wash their dead bodies, and give them honourable burial; and when they have thus laid them in the ground, they bow themselves three times towards the earth, and cast behind them grass newly plucked up; intimating thereby, that the body which they have laid in the earth, shall one day rise again and flourish. Accordingly, while they perform the ceremony of throwing the grass, they sing these words of the prophet Isaiah, Your bones shall flourish like an herb, Isa. lxvi. 14.

But this article of the resurrection of the dead, which is found in some few passages of the Old Testament, is to be seen almost in every page of the New, and the testimonies concerning it are so plain and express, that it is not possible to reject this wholesome doctrine, without abjuring, at the same time, the Christian religion, and giving the lie to the Holy Ghost.

That our faith may be every way established, God has been pleased, not only to publish the resurrection from the dead by his prophets and apostles, and to discover to us many excellent images, and symbolical representations of it; but to give us undeniable testimony of his power, he hath raised several from the dead. In the Old Testament, he raised up two children, one at the prayer of the prophet Elijah, 1 Kings xvii. 22, the other at that of Elisha, 2 Kings iv.; likewise the dead body, which being let down into Elisha's sepulchre, revived upon touching his bones, 2 Kings xiii. 21. During our Saviour's abode upon earth, he raised to life the daughter of Jairus that was dead, Matt. ix.; the widow's son of Nain, who was carrying out upon his bier to the grave, Luke vii.; and Lazarus, who had lain in the sepulchre four days, whose body began to stink, John xi. When this merciful Saviour yielded up the ghost upon the cross, the graves were

opened, and many bodies of saints which slept, arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the Holy City, and appeared unto many, Matt. xxvii. 52, 53. After his ascension, he raised from the dead, Dorcas, a charitable widow, at the prayer of St Peter, and to comfort the poor widows that wept, Acts ix.; and a young man, named Eutychus, whom he restored to life at the prayer of St Paul, that the congregation of the faithful might be comforted, who were troubled at his fall and sudden death, Acts xx.

But, chiefly, we have the example of our Lord, who raised himself up by his own divine power. This glorious instance not only strikes us with admiration, but it also settles our faith, and nourishes our hopes. The resurrection of other persons shows what God can do, but that of Christ declares to us what he will do, and is a precious earnest of our future resurrection. It is not possible for us to believe as we ought, that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, without believing at the same time that he will one day raise us up. This St Paul endeavours to enforce: If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him, 1 Thess. iv. 14. As the head is, so shall be the members. As the first fruits are, so will be the harvest. This is what the same apostle teaches us in the 15th chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians, in these excellent words: Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming.

Against this holy and divine doctrine some object, that there are bodies consumed by fire, and reduced to ashes. But what follows from hence? Whether the body moulders into dust, or is turned to ashes, the power of God is equally able to restore them to their pristine forms. Since certain herbs, being burned, rise again out of their own ashes by a natural inclination, as we have already observed; and since the industry of art can make transparent bodies (of an exquisite beauty) from melted ashes; shall not God, who is infinitely above all the powers of nature created by him, and all arts and sciences of which he is the author, be able from our ashes to compose a beautiful and perfect body?

They allege that a great number of bodies have been swallowed up by the sea, and buried in its waves. I acknowledge this to be true; but I affirm, that the hand of God is no less powerful to raise up a body from the depths of the sea,

than from the bowels of the earth. He who hath set bounds to this great ocean, Psal. civ. 9, that saith to the deep, *be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers*, Isa. xliv. 27, hath he not an absolute command over it? Cannot he oblige it to restore those bodies that have been committed to its keeping, as when he spake unto the fish that had swallowed up Jonah, and it vomited him out upon the dry land? Jonah ii. 10.

Again they tell us, that many bodies have been devoured by wild beasts, and have not only become their food, but been converted into their substance. This objection is of little weight; for when a human body shall have passed through the bowels of all the beasts in the world, and been changed a thousand and a thousand times in their substance, yet this cannot hinder God from restoring it entire at the day of the resurrection; for those animals shall never rise again; therefore it will be unnecessary to inquire what becomes of them when the body shall re-assume that which they have devoured and converted into their own substance.

The most plausible objection is that concerning the Anthropophagi or man-eaters; for it is known that in the Indies there are savages so barbarous as to feed upon human flesh, and to esteem it as one of their greatest dainties. Some may answer, that such kind of inhumanities are not ordinary, and that these wretched Indians, who live without hope and without God in the world, never practise this horrid excess, but in cases of necessity, or when they would wreak their diabolical revenge upon their enemies. But those who have given us the history of this new world, relate, that in some provinces, there were formerly savages so cruel and inhuman, as not only to devour the flesh of their enemies, whom they sacrificed to their idols, but also of their own people, which they sold openly in their shambles. The same historians tell us, that others of these barbarous nations were so impiously mistaken, as to account it an act of piety to their parents and friends, to give them a sepulchre in their own stomachs. Moreover they tell us, that even at this day, there are some who, like so many mad dogs, feed upon children, and hunt after men, as we do after wild beasts of the field.

Supposing these relations true, I must desire the reader to observe, that there are two kinds of parts that compose the human body, the one solid, as the bones and nerves, which are so essential to it, that without them it would not be a true body; the other adventitious, as the fluids, which serve it merely for food and nourishment. Now I affirm, that when it happens that men feed upon their own kind, God so orders

it by his wonderful providence, that the essential and solid parts of the one never enter into the substance of the solid parts of the other. At the great day of the resurrection, these bodies shall re-assume all their essential and solid parts, without which they would not be true bodies; but they will have no occasion for the adventitious or fluid parts, such as the blood and juices, for then they shall have no more inward heat to consume them, no more hunger and thirst. Therefore, they shall have no more need of meat or drink, or of any other thing whatsoever that administers nourishment. Let metals be ever so much mingled, the goldsmith separates them with ease. In the same manner, let our human bodies be ever so much blended together, God will be able to separate them one from the other. When the goldsmith would separate his metals, he casts them into the melting-pot, and causeth them to pass through the fire; but God, who can do all things of himself, hath no need of the fire or the melting-pot; since by his word, or at the twinkling of an eye, he can cause this separation to be made, and render to each body that which is essential and necessary to it. In a word, if the difficulty was far greater than it is, and the solution of it not so easy to be found, that should not lessen our faith, or cause us to doubt of the resurrection of the body. When questions arise concerning matters that the Holy Scripture hath not expressly declared and decided, or that cannot be drawn from it by any necessary and evident consequence, it is lawful to dispute either for or against such things; but when they concern such truths, as this sacred writ, inspired of God, plainly and clearly sets forth, our faith must learn her duty, to submit to Almighty God, and believe that there is nothing impossible with him. Now this doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, is so expressly and clearly revealed in the Holy Scripture, that it seems as visible as the sun-beams at noon-day.

The richness of this subject naturally gives birth to a great many important questions; an answer to which may help to set it in a clearer light. First, it is asked, by whom, and by whose power this resurrection shall be effected? The Scripture itself gives occasion to this inquiry; for sometimes it ascribes it to God the Father, as in John, chap. 5, The Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, ver. 21; sometimes to the Son, as in Phil. chap. 3, Jesus Christ shall change our vile body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself, ver. 21; and sometimes to the Holy Ghost, as in Romans, chap. 8,

If the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you, ver. 11. But this difficulty is easily solved ; for all the external works of God, that concern the creatures, are common to the three persons of the most holy, most glorious, and most adorable Trinity ; so that we shall rise again by the infinite power of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Nevertheless, the resurrection is more particularly ascribed to the Son, as he is judge of the quick and the dead ; in which quality all power is given unto him in heaven and in earth, Matt. xxviii. 18.

Second. Some inquire farther, when this resurrection shall be ? I answer, that it shall be in the day which God hath appointed, in the which he shall judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, Acts xvii. 31. You are not to expect, Christian souls, that I should tell you precisely the day when this shall happen ; for it belongs not to us to know the times and seasons which God hath reserved to himself. It is true, we see that most part of the prophecies are already fulfilled; so that we may say in general, The Lord is at hand, Phil. iv. 5, now is our salvation nearer than when we believed, Rom. xiii. 11. Nevertheless, I cannot undertake to point out to you this glorious day, nor to tell you the year, nor even the age when it shall be. There is no man upon earth, nor angel in heaven that is able to speak of it with any certainty. This is what Jesus Christ himself informs us, But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only, Matt. xxiv. 36 ; and whereas our Lord adds, neither the Son, Mark xiii. 32, we must understand this to be spoken of himself, as he was a man during his abode in this world: for as he is God, he knows all things from all eternity ; and even as he is man, he knows all things in that state of glory to which he is exalted ; but he hath hid from us the time of his coming, that we may expect him at every moment. Thus he tells his holy apostles, Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up, Matt. xxiv. 42, 43. He writes in the same manner to the angel of the church of Sardis : Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what

hour I will come upon thee, Rev. iii. 3. The primitive Christians were well acquainted with this doctrine, as we may conclude from that passage of St Paul: But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you; for you yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night; for when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape, 1 Thess. v. 1, 2, 3. The time of the coming of the Son of Man, is likened to the days of Noah; for as the inhabitants of the world, before the deluge, were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, insensible of the flood, till it came and took them all away; so will it be at Christ's second coming. See Matt. xxiv. 37, 38, 39.

Solomon hath observed, That hope deferred maketh the heart sick, Prov. xiii. 12; but the lively hope of the resurrection is an exception to this. For, admitting it may yet be delayed for several thousand years, it can little affect those who die in the Lord. Their bodies in the grave have an undisturbed repose, and are as free from impatience as a man in a sound sleep; and their souls in their separate state, are with the Lord, 2 Cor. v. 8, and doubtless do enjoy so much felicity as effectually excludes every uneasy passion, every kind of disquietude. St Peter tells us, That a thousand years with the Lord, are but as one day, 2 Pet. iii. 8. Perhaps we may conclude in like manner, respecting human spirits in paradise, that a thousand years in that happy state, are to them but as one day in the present world, and that numbers of years pass off with greater (seeming) celerity, to the perfected spirits above, than moments to such who live in the midst of troubles below.

Third. Some make it a matter of inquiry, where this resurrection shall take place? The extravagant conceits of the Jews have given rise to this question, inasmuch as many of them hold, that the dead will be raised only in the land of Canaan, and that the bodies of those Jews who die, and are deposited in different parts of the world, make their way through the secret caverns of the globe, till they arrive at the Holy Land: and moreover, that they shall feel more or less pain in their passage, according to the purity or pollution of their lives. It is needless to spend time in refuting such groundless and impertinent opinions; but it may give us an occasion to acknowledge the just judgment of heaven upon this unhappy people, who have rejected, with a hellish obstinacy, the great and only Saviour of sinners; inasmuch as they received

not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, they are left under strong delusions, and to believe lies, 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11. As Christians, taught by the Spirit in the Scriptures, we believe, wherever the body is found at that day, there shall it be raised again, whether in the earth or the seas, Rev. xx. 13.

Fourth. Some further inquire, what shall arise from the grave? To this it may be replied, the same body that falls by death, shall be the subject of the resurrection. Should the Almighty form a new body, and unite it to the soul, this could not, with any propriety, be called a resurrection, but rather a new creation; neither shall the soul at that time take such a body as its own, inasmuch as things only alike, are not the same, how remarkable soever that likeness may be. The very same body which the soul animated during its abode here, shall then be raised and fashioned anew. As in the spiritual resurrection, the Lord does not create a new soul, but quickens and sanctifies that which before was dead in trespasses and sins, so in this corporal resurrection, God does not make another body, but bestows a renewed life upon that which lay under the power of death.

When our Saviour rose from the dead, he did not form for himself a new body, but his soul assumed and re-animated the same he had laid down; in like manner, at the general resurrection, he will not create new bodies for the children of men, but restore life to those bodies that had been lodged in the silent grave. This argument seems to be unanswerable, inasmuch as the resurrection of Jesus Christ is not only the efficient or meritorious cause of the resurrection of the dead, but it is also the pattern or model, or (as the schoolmen phrase it) the exemplary cause of this glorious privilege. But there is little need of arguments where the Scriptures are clear and express. St Paul, treating on this subject, says, That the Lord Jesus Christ shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, Phil. iii. 20, 21; and elsewhere, This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality, 1 Cor. xv. 53. We read also of the life of Jesus being made manifest in our body, &c., 2 Cor. iv. 10, 11; and holy Job, in an early day, having a look to the resurrection, spake of seeing God in his flesh, and with his eyes, &c., Job xix. 26: nay, in some copies of the creed, called the apostles, and particularly the copy of Aquilla, it is not only, I believe, the resurrection of the flesh, but I believe the resurrection of this flesh.

Fifth. Some inquire, whether the bodies of the wicked shall rise from the dead, as well as those of the righteous? Some, among the Jews, who delight in whimsical notions, conceive, that the resurrection does regard the just only, and that others have no part in it; and to strengthen this false opinion, they abuse those words of sacred Scripture, The wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous, Psal. i. 5. Nay, they are so besotted with pride, and a high conceit of themselves, that they imagine none are righteous but those of their own nation; that none are pleasing to God, or shall share in the resurrection save the Israelites: but, blessed be God, we who are Christians are better instructed; and we firmly believe every individual of Adam's posterity, living and dying in the different parts of the world, from the beginning of time to its last period, shall be raised from the dead at the last day.

St Paul seems very positive, that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust, Acts xxiv. 15. And the Psalmist in the passage above cited, advances nothing against this everlasting truth; he does not say the wicked shall not rise again, but that they shall not stand in the judgment, &c.; i. e. not be able to bear up under it, or abide in it, but will sink and fall under the dreadful sentence of the righteous judge, highly displeased with their numerous iniquities. But it may not be amiss farther to observe, though all, without exception, will be raised from the dead, yet there will be a remarkable difference between the righteous and others, as to the manner in which it will be done. The wicked will be drawn out of the grave as capital criminals out of the dungeon, to receive sentence of death; but the Lord Jesus will raise believers with this view, that their bodies as well as their souls, may have share in the precious fruits of redemption. Christians are called the children of the resurrection, as none but these shall enjoy the eternal blessings and benefits consequent thereunto.

Sixth. Some perhaps may farther inquire, after what manner this resurrection will be brought about? From Sacred Scripture we learn, that the Lord Jesus Christ will descend from heaven with power and great glory, having myriads of angels and saints attending, preceded by the archangel sounding the trump of God; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised, 1 Thess. iii. 13; iv. 16; 1 Cor. xv. 52. At the sounding of the silver trumpet in the Jewish jubilee, the prisons were opened, and the prisoners set

free; in like manner, at the sound of the last trumpet, all the prisons of death will be broke open, and all the bodies of the dead delivered at that day. The sea will give up the dead that are in it, and death and hell deliver up the dead which are in them. The beloved Lazarus in the grave, hearing the voice of Jesus calling him by his name, and bidding him come forth, presently obeyed; and no sooner shall the powerful voice of Jesus sound through the territories of the dead, but all shall arise and stand before him. For the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, John v. 28, 29.

Seventh. It may be asked, with what stature of body shall the dead arise? Some are ready to conclude they shall rise again in the same stature in which they departed this life: this conclusion they draw from St John's visionary description of the last judgment: I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, &c., Rev. xx. 12. Others again believe that all the righteous shall rise again in perfect stature, and like to the Lord Jesus; this they endeavour to prove by a passage of St Paul, Till we all come to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, Eph. iv. 13.

As this particular (with many more) does but remotely relate to everlasting felicity, it the less concerns us to pry into it; and as the Scriptures are silent concerning this, it behoves us to think and speak of it with caution. I hardly believe we shall rise again in the same stature of body in which we die. The other opinion, that all the saints shall rise from the dead in stature like to Christ's, and in that respect bear his image in their bodies, carries in it nothing contrary to piety: but surely this cannot be proved from the words of St Paul above recited; since the whole tenor of his discourse does evidently discover, that he intends not the stature of the body, but of the soul, consisting in knowledge, holiness, &c.

It is highly probable, the righteous shall rise again in what may be called a perfect stature of body, without deficiency or infirmity. The beauty and perfection of the outward frame, largely contributes to the glory and majesty of the body, and without which we cannot be said to be perfectly happy. This kind of perfection is agreeable to the command and dominion which the Lord will give to his saints over the other creatures in and after the resurrection. Were those who die in the state of childhood to rise again in the same stature,

and such who depart hence in old age to leave their graves with their bodies feeble and infirm as laid down, in either case, how is it consistent with the glory and perfection of the after state, where nothing will be wanting, nothing amiss?

The promised land was a type of the celestial Canaan; and it is not without good reason we are repeatedly informed, that none of those who took possession of the Holy Land, were aged persons, except Joshua and Caleb, the rest not exceeding sixty years. Perhaps we might also apply to the Jerusalem above, what is spoken by the prophet respecting Jerusalem below, There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days, Isa. lxv. 20.

It pleased the all-wise Creator to form our first parents in perfect stature, and put them in possession of the terrestrial paradise; and it may be supposed, he will raise up the righteous in like manner, and introduce them into the celestial one. The body of a child in the present state is many years before it does arrive at a manly stature, but in the resurrection the Lord may affect this as in a moment. What is spoken by St John in the passage before mentioned, respecting the dead, small and great, standing before God, Rev. xx. 12, seems to have no regard to the size or bigness of the body, but to the state and condition of the persons spoken of, intimating that kings and princes, with their subjects and slaves, must all appear in that awful day, according to what St Paul declares, We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, &c., 2 Cor. v. 10.

Eighth. Some may be disposed farther to inquire, what bodies the wicked shall have at and after the resurrection? If we consider the smoke of the bottomless pit, the fury of the infernal flames, with the violent torments which the wicked shall suffer, perhaps we might conclude they shall appear ill-favoured, deformed, and dreadful to behold; that there will appear, in their guilty looks and ghastly countenances, the image of Satan, and the furies of hell. But be this as it will, the bodies of the wicked will be immortal, and their immortality a miserable one; that it had been better for them not to have been, or even to have been as the beasts that perish, rather than thus live to die eternally, be ever dying, yet never dead; plunged into miseries so great as to be inexpressible, and for their continuance eternally; in these exquisite sufferings seeking death, or to be

reduced to nothing; but in vain, for death will fly from them, and they be left in the extremity of anguish, to the never-dying worm, and unquenchable fire. O miserable bodies, and yet more miserable souls! thus cast down into hell, where the devils will discharge all their artillery, exert all their fury, and take pleasure in tormenting to all eternity.

Ninth. Some may be disposed more particularly to inquire concerning the qualities of the bodies of believers after the resurrection? As to the substance of their bodies, it will probably be the same as in this life, real human bodies, not imaginary ones. In the resurrection, the bodies of the faithful, like that of their Saviour, will be attended with glorious qualities, which they had not before; but the reality and true nature of their bodies will probably remain, upon which account they might use the language of the risen Redeemer, *Handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have*, Luke xxiv. 39. As the soul does continue essentially the same, when perfectly freed from sin, corruption, and every vicious inclination: so it is likely the body will remain the same, as to its essential parts, though wonderfully changed with regard to its qualities. Corruption and mortality will then be for ever cast off, with sickness, pain, and every other inconvenience which did attend it during this life. In a word, all bodily imperfections will be removed, all deficiencies made up, and the bodies of the saints rendered perfect and beautiful, without spot or blemish.

Our Saviour in the gospel, upon different occasions, does indeed advise his followers, if the eye offend, pluck it out; if the hand or the foot offend, cut it off; and assigns a good reason for this, it is better to enter into life, halt or maimed, than with a perfect body to suffer everlasting misery, Matt. v. 29, 30; xviii. 8, 9. But these passages are manifestly figurative; and by them our Lord would instruct us, that for his sake we must deny ourselves, our irregular and importunate lusts; and he seems to ground his manner of speaking upon this supposition, That if it were possible to enter into heaven with a maimed and mutilated body, it were better so to enjoy the happiness thereof, than with a whole body to endure the torments of hell. But it cannot from hence be inferred, that any of the righteous shall rise from their graves with bodies imperfect in any part, and especially as that seems inconsistent with perfect felicity. Moreover, as the very being of sin, as to them, will be entirely abolished, no part of the punishment of sin can well be supposed to abide.

It must be acknowledged, there have been, and still are some who hold, that the martyrs will bear on their bodies the scars and other tokens of their sufferings for Christ, in like manner, as the Saviour himself, after his resurrection, could show the print of the nails in his hands and feet, and of the spear in his late wounded side ; they farther considered the martyrs as comparable to soldiers who have acted with bravery in the field of battle, who have received wounds in the service of their king and country, the marks of which they esteem honourable and glorious, and remaining proofs of their intrepidity and courage. But however plausible this sort of reasoning may seem, we dare not assert it will be so, since Sacred Scripture as to this is silent. The martyrs are set forth as arrayed in robes, washed and whitened in the blood of the Lamb ; and although they are said to have come out of great tribulation, yet no mention is made of any remaining marks of their preceding sufferings. See Rev. vii. 13, 14.

Our Saviour was pleased to preserve the above mentioned marks on his new-raised body, perhaps for that end and purpose already answered by them, viz. the removing unbelief from his doubting apostles ; or perhaps for some future purpose, of which we have nothing certain to say ; but surely from this instance nothing can be concluded respecting any similar marks in the bodies of any of his followers. Thus much we may safely say, either the bodies of the martyrs will have no such scars, &c., as are contended for, or, if any at all, not such as shall introduce deformity in the body, or deprive it of any part required to render it perfect. Perfection of body seems necessary to perfect felicity.

In the resurrection, the bodies of believers will be freed from various infirmities which attended our first parents in the state of innocence. They were subject to hunger, thirst, weariness and the like ; and consequently in need of meat, drink, sleep, &c. And though they might safely depend upon the protection of God, while they continued in their integrity, yet in themselves they were liable to injury by fire or sword, and to be greatly annoyed even by the scorching rays of the sun : but the bodies of the saints at that day, and for ever, will be secure from pain, weariness, and every kind of violence ; they shall hunger and thirst no more, neither shall the sun light on them, or any heat. See Rev. vii. 16, 17; xxi. 4.

It is probable that the glorified body will possess all the beauties and perfections it is capable of, and that these will

never change or fade, nor shall any accident be able to destroy or diminish them. The longer conceivable duration shall not impress upon this body any evidence of age, but it will always appear youthful, healthful, and in the height of beauty; on which account it may be compared to a precious stone that retaineth all its lustre without any alloy, or the sun that shineth in all its brightness, yet suffers no sensible abatement of its light and heat.

These bodies, when raised and glorified, will have cast off every gross quality, by reason of which they are now tending to the earth, but then shall mount and move with greater celerity than the eagle, when seeking after, or hastening to the prey. The body in its present state, is of the earth, earthy, and sown in the grave a natural body: but it will be raised from thence a spiritual one, not changed into a spirit; it will be a body still made up of its proper parts, yet spiritual; because freed from its earthly qualities, will live no more an animal life, or need any longer the present supports of it, any more than the angels in heaven do.

Jesus Christ, forty days after his resurrection, ascended up towards heaven in a cloud; but surely this cloud could not be necessary to support, or any way assist him in his ascent. When in his state of humiliation, and his body resembling our own, he then walked upon the waves of the sea; and could it have been matter of wonder, if after the resurrection-change, he had been seen walking upon the wings of the wind? If any created assistance had been needful to our Saviour's ascent, he had legions of angels at command. This cloud, then, is rather to be considered as an evidence of his divine Majesty and magnificence. It hath pleased the Lord on various occasions to discover himself to his people as attended with a cloud; and this in Scripture is called the glory of the Lord, Exod. xl. 34, 35. This was the visible token of the divine presence, Exod. xiii. 21, and xxiv. 16; 1 Kings viii. 10. And upon the whole we may consider the cloud attending our Saviour's ascension, as a chariot of state in which the King of Kings rode in triumph to glory.

The resurrection-bodies of the saints, will, it is supposed, shine with excelling lustre; not only discovering a splendour in their countenance or face (like that of Moses, when he had been in the Holy Mount with his Maker), but in their whole body, like the true diamond, which casts abroad its lustre on every side. It is said of Christ at his transfiguration, That his raiment was white as the light, Matt. xvii. 2. In like manner, our bodies, which are but a covering to

the soul, will, it is thought, appear pellucid and transparent; hence compared by the prophet to the brightness of the firmament, and of the stars, and by our Lord, to the lustre of the sun itself. See Dan. xii. 3; Matt. xiii. 43.

These bodies at the resurrection will be immortal and incorruptible, will abide both as to their being and their glory. They will be rendered more durable than the visible heavens, or any part of their furniture, the sun, the moon, or the stars. The Psalmist hath observed, that the heavens shall perish, and all of them shall wax old like a garment, &c., Psal. cii. 25, 26. And St Peter speaks of their passing away with a great noise, 2 Pet. iii. 7, 10. But the new formed body will abide for ever, the mortal will put on immortality, the children of the resurrection can die no more, for death will be swallowed up in victory, Luke xx. 36; 1 Cor. xv. 54. The Old and New Testament furnish us with instances of some that were raised from the dead; but they hereby became subject to death and corruption a second time. How happily different it will be with believers in that day, when mortality shall be swallowed up of life, and all join in those joyful interrogatories, O death where is thy sting; O grave where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, &c. See 2 Cor. v. 4; 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56, 57.

In a word, and to carry this matter to the happiest height, the bodies of believers at the resurrection will resemble that of the Saviour himself. As St Paul is professedly treating on this subject; he may very fairly be supposed to point at this particular in the following words: The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly, 1 Cor. xv. 47, 48, 49. And more plainly still in another epistle, We look for the Saviour (from heaven), the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, &c., Phil. iii. 20, 21.

When the temple of Jerusalem was building a second time, on the return from the Babylonish captivity, the ancient persons, who had seen the former house in its glory, wept aloud, on thinking how far short this latter house would fall, in point of splendour and magnificence, of that which had been destroyed. See Ezra iii. 12; Hag. ii. 3. But when

the second temple of the body is erected, nothing will be heard among the children of God, but sounds of triumph and joy; and such who have by faith and meditation, seen and considered this house (the body) in its former glory and innocent state, will have no cause to lament the entrance of sin, and consequent destruction by death, as it will be universally acknowledged, The glory of this latter house is greater, far greater, than that of the former; and all this by the appearance, presence and power of the Lord Jesus, Hag. ii. 9.

Before we close this subject, it may not be improper to take some notice of such who shall be found alive at Christ's second coming, and whose bodies will not be lodged in the silent grave. Of these the apostle speaks very particularly: Behold I will show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; (for the trumpet shall sound), and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed, 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. And in another epistle, For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them that are asleep: for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord; wherefore, comfort one another with these words, 1 Thess. iv. 15, 18.

Indeed the apostle, writing to the Hebrews, says, It is appointed unto men once to die. If this passage be taken in its most obvious sense, the general rule must be supposed to admit of some exceptions: but perhaps it may intimate, that this change will be a kind of death, at least equivalent to it; and the like glorious qualities will take place on the bodies of believers then found alive, as upon those which are then raised from the grave; so no difference will appear between the one and the other, but all equally made meet to partake of eternal felicity. The bodies of the wicked also will be changed at the resurrection, and rendered like to those of the same character hauled out of their graves, all like immortal, to take their part in eternal misery.

O happy believer in the Lord Jesus! whatever the present condition of the body may be, take home to thyself the special consolations this subject does naturally afford thee. It is grievous that the body is imperfect as to any of its mem-

bers, or deficient in any particular sense common to mankind, whether so born, or it be brought on by disease, accident &c.; cheer up under the thought, that this body will hereafter appear in full perfection, and so abide for ever. Does age and sickness destroy the strength and beauty of the outer frame? Consider the resurrection will furnish thee with renewed vigour, adorn thee with perfect beauty, and be attended with eternal glory.

The body, though laid in the grave, will not be lost there, but found with great advantage at the resurrection. As the patriarch Joseph, when leaving this world, commanded his brethren concerning his bones; so Jesus will give his sacred commands concerning the bodies of believers, and the different parts of them, that they may be delivered from the grave, that house of bondage and corruption, and safely conveyed to the celestial Canaan. When the tabernacle of old was taken in pieces, the high-priest committed the several parts of it to the charge of the Levites, and nothing was wanting when they came to set it up again; so the Saviour and high-priest of his people, will take proper care that no part of the earthly tabernacle, which he hath sanctified for himself, be then missing, but that the whole be produced and erected anew, and with greater glory than ever.

Who would not readily lay aside his over-worn garments at night, if certain of being clad with rich and royal attire in the morning? Who would not cheerfully lay himself down to sleep in his bed, could he safely depend upon waking and rising again with renewed health, vigour and beauty? Who would not joyfully relinquish a mean and miserable cottage for a season, that so it might be adorned with all the glory and magnificence of a splendid palace? O believer, comfort thyself in the Lord Jesus, and contentedly cast off at death this garment, the body, which is incommodious and troublesome on several accounts in its present state, assuring thyself thou shalt receive this same garment again, abundantly bettered and beautified, rendered white as the snow, and illustrious as the light. Let it not concern thee, that the earthly tabernacle will shortly be taken down; for the Lord will build it up again, yea, convert it into a temple that shall stand for ever in all its glory. What though the several senses suffer decays, and the eyes in particular will soon be closed, no more to behold the light below? Grieve not at this, inasmuch as these eyes will be formed anew with additional beauty, and with them thou wilt behold the king in his glory, and behold him for thyself; or as the Psalmist

expresses the same thing, behold his face in righteousness, when awaking with his likeness, Job xix. 27; Psal. xvii. 15. The ears now, it may be, are almost deaf, and will soon be entirely stopped; but hereafter they shall hear, with everlasting delight, the harmonious songs of saints and of angels. The tongue, which now faulters through weakness, and in a little time will speak no more, shall then be formed anew, and tuned for praise, joining into the melodious hallelujahs of the blessed above. The hands, now weak, shall then be made strong to receive, and for ever retain, immortal palms of victory. With the feeble feet, now scarce sufficient to support the body, thou wilt then follow the Lamb to the realms of glory, and travel the streets of the heavenly Jerusalem. In a word, the whole body, though laid in the grave, and turned into dust, shall then arise, and shine as the sun in the firmament, and in its fullest splendour.

What hath the Christian to desire more? At death, the soul goes to God, to Christ, to angels, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to share in their felicities. The body indeed is lodged in the grave; but here it will be attended with a quiet repose, at the end of which it shall rise again. The Lord will publish the grand jubilee, the prisons of death will all be opened, and the prisoners set free. The trumpet shall sound, and the dead in Christ be raised incorruptible, immortal and glorious. The Christian may humbly say, My heart is glad, my glory (or tongue) rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope; for the Lord will not leave it always in the grave, or suffer it to abide under the power of corruption; he will show me the path of life, and admit me to his presence, where there is fulness of joy and pleasure for evermore, Psal. xvi. 9, 10, 11.

Then let not the actual, and sensible approach of death disturb the quiet of thy mind, shake thy faith and confidence in God, or drive thee from hope, that anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast, since fixed in heaven, where Jesus as the forerunner is for thee entered. Comfort thyself with the words of holy Job, I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me, Job xix. 25, 26, 27. And with the words of St Paul, We look for the Saviour from heaven, even the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the

working whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself, Phil. iii. 20, 21.

XXVIII.

Prayer and Meditation of a true Believer, prepared to leave this world, and has hope in a glorious resurrection to eternal felicity.

O Infinite and everlasting Saviour, thou son of God ! by whom all things were created, and without whom was not any thing made that was made ; thou hast not only formed our spirits, and fashioned our bodies, but when both were miserably lost, corrupted and ruined by sin, hast redeemed us by thy blood, and renewed us by thy spirit and grace. The frail body is but an earthen vessel ; yet thou hast furnished it with a peculiar treasure, ordained it to be the temple of the Holy Ghost, a habitation of God through the Spirit, and will make it meet to partake with the soul, of the eternal happiness of thy heavenly kingdom. I find my natural strength failing, and the body to be dying daily, and am persuaded it soon will return to the dust ; but this is my comfort, while the outward frame suffers decays, the inward man is renewed day by day ; and though the body falls by death, and in dishonour, thou wilt raise it up again in glory. Difficult as this may seem to sense, it cannot be so to thee, my Lord and my God ; for all power is thine in heaven and on earth, and thou raisest and quickenest whom thou wilt : out of the dust thou formedst the human body, at the beginning; and though by death it be reduced to its former state, thou art able of its dust to form it again at the end of time. Thou, O Lord, hast created my soul and infused it into the body; and though they are separated by death for a season, thou wilt command them together again, and render that union happy for ever. O glorious Prince of life ; thou hast encountered the enemy, death, overcome the king of terrors, disarmed and stripped him of his terrible array. Thou hast submitted to the stroke of death to answer the most valuable ends ; but art returned to life, livest for ever, and hast the keys of hell and of death ; who openest and none can shut, hast power to kill and make alive at thy pleasure. Thou, O Jesus, art the resurrection and the life, art able and willing to deliver this body from the power of death, to awake the sleeping dust with the sound of the archangel's trumpet,

according to thy word. I hope to see the glorious day when thou wilt appear in triumph, attended with holy angels, proclaiming liberty to all thy captives under the power of death, and restoring to them all spiritual and eternal blessings which they had forfeited by sin. Earth and sea shall readily surrender their dead, in obedience to thy commands. O omnipotent Word, that brought the heavens and the earth into being! Thou wilt cause thy voice to be heard in the grave, the dead shall hear it, and march out to meet thee at thy judgment-seat. Then shall we arise, not wrapt in our grave-clothes (as Lazarus heretofore), nor with any relics of infirmity about us; but with bodies perfect, glorious, and abundantly beautiful, fashioned like unto thy own. This corruptible shall put on incorruption, this mortal shall put on immortality, and inherit eternal life. Sure I am, my Redeemer will come in the clouds of heaven, and mine eyes shall behold him in his glory. With these ears shall I hear the awful sound of the angel's trumpet, and the songs of the blessed attendants of Christ at his coming; with my tongue I hope to praise him; with my (now) dying arms to embrace my Saviour; and with my feet to follow him complete in person, to his heavenly kingdom.

O Lord, I am ready to leave the world, my departure is nigh at hand; flesh and heart are failing me, and death stands waiting for his commission to strike the fatal blow; but notwithstanding all the difficulties and objections that ignorance and unbelief are ready to start, I am persuaded I shall rise again from the grave, to behold thy Majesty, and to share in thy glory. *Amen.*

CHAPTER XXIV.

The twelfth Consolation. The destruction of death, and the eternal and most happy life which we shall enjoy, both in soul and body, after the resurrection.

HAVING treated thus largely of the happiness prepared for our souls at their departure out of this life, and of the glorious resurrection promised to our bodies, when Jesus Christ shall come down from heaven in his glory to judge the quick and the dead; it shall seem that we have nothing more to say,

but as Moses, after he had made the ark of shittim-wood, and had overlaid it with pure gold, made upon it a crown of gold round about it, Exod. xxv.; in the same manner having represented to you the incorruption and future glory of the body, which may be looked upon as a sacred ark; where God will inhabit for ever; and having shown you, that by his Almighty and gracious power, it shall become more incorruptible than shittim-wood, and more glorious than pure gold; I will now, by God's assistance, make upon it a crown more precious than the finest gold, and richer than all the jewels in the world; that is, to crown this work, and to make it as complete as I can, I intend to draw as perfect a picture as my infirmities will give me leave, of eternal glory and happiness, which we hope to enjoy both in soul and body after the resurrection. But, first, it will be necessary that I should say something of the entire and final destruction of all our enemies, and that I should show you our triumphant conquest over death.

When Jesus Christ shall come to judge the world in righteousness, Acts xvii. 31; he shall sit upon a glorious and most splendid throne, of which Solomon's magnificent throne was but a shadow and an imperfect type. He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other, Matt. xxiv. The sight of this glorious Saviour shall then fill us with an unspeakable joy, and cause us to cry out with a holy rapture, Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation, Isa. xxv. 9. But all the kindreds of the earth, when they shall behold this triumphant King coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, shall lament and smite their breasts in despair, and say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand? Rev. vi. 16, 17.

Then the Lord shall bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and shall make manifest the counsels of the heart, with all its most secret devices, 1 Cor. iv. 5. The books shall be opened, not only those of our own guilty consciences, where Satan's image and deed shall affright us, but also those wherein God himself hath written with his own finger, all our actions, words and most hidden thoughts; and according to the record of these books shall all men be judged.

This is what St John tells us in the 20th chapter of the Revelations: I saw (saith he) a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. With whom St Paul agrees: We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad, 2 Cor. v. 10.

There are three sorts of persons who shall appear before this glorious tribunal. First. Such as never had any other tutor but nature, and who have been acquainted with no other works of God, but those of his creation and providence, in which, nevertheless, he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, Acts xiv. 17. Secondly. Such as have been partakers of his revealed will, who have been taught by the law what works are pleasing or displeasing to God; who have likewise heard of a Messiah from their ancient prophets, and have seen his portraiture in the types and shadows of Moses's ordinances. And, lastly, those to whom the grace of God, that bringeth salvation to all men, hath plainly appeared, Titus ii. 11; and before whose eyes our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, 2 Tim. i. 10. There are none of all these persons, if they have lived in impiety and debauchery, and are dead in impenitency, that shall be able to excuse themselves in this dreadful day of judgment; but the one sort shall be deemed more guilty than the other, and therefore shall be condemned to greater punishments.

The knowledge wherewith God hath enlightened the soul of man, hath been very much obscured by the prince of darkness: but yet it is not so totally extinguished, but that some rays still remain; and the law which God hath written in his heart, is not so utterly defaced, but that some lines are still visible. Whence it comes to pass, that no man living can boast, that he hath done all the good which his conscience was convinced he ought to perform, nor that he hath abstained from all the evil actions from which it dissuaded him. They who have lived and are dead, without any law of God revealed to them, shall be judged without the law, and shall be condemned for having taken pleasure in extinguishing the remains of their natural light, and in stifling the good and

reasonable dictates of their consciences; for having abused the favours of heaven, and filled themselves with God's good creatures, without returning him due thanks, and because they have not meditated as they ought upon the many magnificent and noble works of nature, nor learned by that means to know God, who has imprinted upon them such evident marks of his eternal power and Godhead: or because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, Rom. i. 21. This St Paul teacheth us in these excellent words: As many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law: For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another. In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel, Rom. ii. 12, 14, 15, 16.

They that profess to know the law, shall be judged by the law; and as they have already heard the thunders of Mount Sinai, so they shall one day feel the thunder-bolts. They shall know, by dreadful experience, what it is to rebel against God, and to draw down upon their guilty heads the terrible curses of his law: Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them, Deut. xxvii. 26; Gal. iii. 10. There is no doubt but that the Jews, hardened in iniquity, unto whom Moses and the prophets addressed so many noble, but vain exhortations to a godly life, shall be punished in a much more severe manner than those poor savages who have never heard the voice of God, who are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and being without God in the world, Eph. ii. 12. For that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes, Luke xii. 47, 48.

But there are no people in the world, who have cause to expect a more rigorous sentence, and more dreadful punishments, than wicked Christians, who profess to know God, and believe in Jesus Christ, yet deny him by their works, and trample under foot the riches of his grace. For can we imagine, that such as have had the gospel preached among them, who have seen Jesus Christ crucified, as it were, before their eyes, and yet have profited nothing by this glori-

ous advantage; can we imagine, I say, that such shall not be punished in another manner than the bare auditors of Moses, who never saw the Messiah but afar off, and in the shadows and ceremonies of the law? Observe, I pray, the inspired words of the apostle to the Hebrews. He that despised Moses's law, died without mercy, under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who have trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, Heb. x. 28, &c. Therefore, when St Paul speaks of such as obey not the gospel of Christ, he saith, They shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, 2 Thess. i. 9. And our Saviour teacheth us, with his own sacred lips, that such as reject so great a salvation shall be punished more grievously than the most abominable sinners unto whom it was never revealed. Therefore, when he sends forth his apostles to preach the gospel of his kingdom, he says unto them, Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words; when ye depart out of that house, or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for that city, Matt. x. 14, 15. Likewise, where he reproaches the incredulity and impenitency of those cities which did not believe, and which were not converted by the light of his gospel, and the glory of his miracles, he cries out, Wo unto thee, Chorazin; wo unto thee, Bethsaida; for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee, Matt. xi. 21, &c.

The Sovereign Judge of the world shall place at his left hand all those wicked souls which have lived without the fear of God, and without expressing charity to the members

of his mystical body, and shall pronounce unto them this dreadful sentence, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me, Matt. xxv. 41, &c. But as for the faithful, who have witnessed their faith, by a good and holy life, and by works of charity and mercy, he will place them at his right hand, and in the presence of God, and all his holy angels, will say unto them, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me, Matt. xxv. 34, &c.

It is made a question, what sign shall immediately precede or accompany the coming of Christ into the world; and this is occasioned by our Saviour himself, who, speaking of the things which are to happen about the time of his glorious appearance, saith, That the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken, and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, Matt. xxiv. 29, 30, &c.

Some imagine, that this sign of the Son of Man is the sign of the cross which will appear in the air. This opinion in itself is innocent; but in regard that it hath no foundation in Scripture, I shall not stay to consider it. Others believe that it shall be that fire with which Jesus Christ shall burn the earth, dissolve the elements, and punish unbelievers. This persuasion is founded upon St Paul's words to the Thessalonians: It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Thess. i. 6, 7, 8. Others affirm, that this sign of the Son of Man is nothing but the body of Jesus Christ bearing the print of the nails in his hands and feet, and the wound of the spear in his side. This

they ground upon these words, Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, Rev. i. 7. And again, there are others who take it in a more natural sense, and believe, that we must not expect any particular sign, but that we must understand by this sign of the Son of Man, all those things which shall declare the end of the world, and the coming of Jesus Christ to judge the quick and the dead. If we take it in this sense, there will be an excellent allusion, and an admirable agreement to that which is commonly practised, when kings and princes make their public entry into any great city; for their coming is proclaimed by the sound of a trumpet, and by all the ensigns of majesty that usually precede or accompany it. In the same manner, the glorious coming of Jesus Christ shall be made known to all by the sound of the archangel's trumpet, and by the signs and wonderful changes which shall suddenly happen in the heavens. This last opinion is very probable; nor are any of the former contrary to the unity of faith: therefore, in a matter indifferent, not clearly decided by the word of God, we leave to every pious soul the liberty to choose that which it likes best.

It is also inquired, whether the souls of the damned go down to hell immediately after their egress out of the body, and are tormented in an unquenchable flame, whose heat is never diminished, as the Christian religion teacheth us, and as we may understand by the parable of the rich glutton? Does it not follow that these wretches are already judged? How is it then that the Son of God will judge them again at the last day, and condemn them to an everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels? I answer, First. That it is no absurdity to say, that one sentence may be pronounced twice: on the contrary, it is usual amongst men to read the sentence of doom to the prisoner before he is taken out of prison; which sentence is afterwards published in the audience of the people at the time of execution. So when the souls of the wicked depart out of their wretched bodies, God pronounces to them the sentence of their condemnation: but when Jesus Christ shall sit upon the throne of his glory, he shall publish the same sentence in the hearing of all the men of the world, and of all the angels of heaven. Secondly. That sentence was never pronounced but to the soul; but then it shall be pronounced to both soul and body, and both together shall be cast into everlasting fire, from whence they shall never be released.

From hence you may understand, Christian souls, that

there are three degrees of punishments or torments to the wicked. For in this life they have a worm that preys upon their heart, and a kind of hell that racks their guilty consciences. At their going out of the world, their souls are plunged headlong into eternal flames, where they suffer unspeakable torture. Their bodies in the meantime are insensible in their graves, as the bodies of the righteous. But at this last and dreadful day of judgment, as the graves shall restore all the dead bodies, hell, which is the place appointed for the punishment of the damned, shall give up all the souls that are tormented in its flames; and these cursed souls shall be again united to their miserable bodies, to suffer the pangs of an eternal death. Thus they shall be cast, body and soul, into the bottomless pit, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, Matt. xxv.; at the same time, the beast, the false prophet, and all the enemies of God and his church, shall be cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone, which is the second death, Rev. xix. 20, 21.

And as when the criminals are all executed, it is usual to punish the executioners for their own crime; so when God Almighty shall have cast off the damned into eternal torments, the devils and infernal furies shall be sent after them, as it is written, The devil that deceived the nations, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever, Rev. xx. 10. What a dreadful sight will it be to have continually before our eyes these roaring lions, these tremendous dragons foaming with rage, and vomiting out floods of fire and flames! yet what a joyful spectacle will it be to God's children, to behold all these infernal furies fast bound in chains, which they shall never be able to break, and shut up in a bottomless pit, out of which they can never escape!

Our Lord shall cast into this lake of fire and brimstone, and shut up in this bottomless pit, not only the devil and his angels, the beast, and the false prophet, and, in general, all wicked and unbelieving souls, but he shall also cast therein death and the grave, or rather, he shall abolish them for ever. For as Joshua, agreeably to what we have already remarked, when he had conquered and subdued the kings of the Amorites, put them not to death until he had overcome all the rest of his enemies; so our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, our true Joshua, hath encountered with death upon the cross, and overcome it by his resurrection, yet he will not entirely destroy it until the last day, when he shall come to judge the world.

Then to crown all his glorious victories, he shall destroy this last enemy, this destroyer of his brethren, and of his members, so that death shall be no more. It shall be no more for the wicked; they shall seek it in vain, to deliver them from their torments. It shall fly from them as a shadow that departs, and is no more found. Much less shall it be for God's children, it shall never again interrupt their rest and happiness.

If the old serpent could enter into the celestial paradise, we might fear his temptations and fiery darts; and if death continued to reign, we should have reason to fear coming again under its empire; but so far shall it be from retaining the least dominion, that it shall be utterly abolished, and all the living shall become immortal. And although our blessed Redeemer will not destroy the being, nor take away the malice of the devil; yet with regard to us, he shall be as if he was not; for he shall never be able to break his chains, or to escape out of his prison; and between him and us there shall be gulfs fixed that can never be passed. So that as Moses, when he looked back upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians, said to the children of Israel, who were affrighted at their pursuit, Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you to-day; for the Egyptians, whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever, Exod. xiv. 13; likewise, when I think upon Satan, and all his infernal host that pursue you, I cannot help crying out, Take courage, Christian souls, and with the eyes of your faith see the salvation of the Lord; for these hellish furies that have persecuted you so long, shall soon be out of a condition to hurt you, or to give you any farther apprehensions. God is going to drown them in the Red Sea of his wrath, and to seal them up for ever in the bottomless pit of his just revenge. For as in the heavenly paradise, there shall be neither pain, nor sorrow, nor grief, nor crying, nor sighs heard; so there shall be neither any fear or fright, or the least alarm, but we shall live there in perfect peace, and a settled tranquillity for ever.

It is recorded of the Macedonians, that they wept for joy, when they beheld their king, Alexander the Great, seated on the throne of Darius, and trampling under his feet the pride and empire of the Persians. But how transporting, how full will our joy be, when we shall behold Jesus Christ, our sovereign Monarch, sitting upon the throne of God, and trampling under his feet the pomp of the world, crushing the great dragon, and bruising all the tyrannical powers of hell? The glory of Alexander vanished with his breath, and all his

trophies were thrown down by death; but our Lord shall triumph over death itself, and the last act of his eternal justice shall be the destruction of that murderer from the beginning.

As then there shall be no more enemies to encounter, nor evils to fear, neither shall there be any advantages to be desired, nor honours to be expected; for God will admit us to an inexhaustible ocean of the most divine pleasures, and raise us up to the highest pitch of glory that our nature shall be capable of. This happiness and glory shall be infinite with respect to its duration. It shall not be like the pomp and magnificence of this world, which passes away in an instant; nor like to the shining of Moses's face, which vanished with his life; nor like the transfiguration upon Mount Tabor, which soon disappeared: for when it shall have continued as many millions of ages as there are stars in the firmament, it shall then but begin, and appear in its rising; so that when we shall be upon this glorious mountain of light and splendour, we shall have more reason, and a greater prospect of success, than St Peter had upon Mount Tabor, to cry out, Lord it is good for us to be here, Matt. xvii. 4.

There is no place so pleasant and delightful, but at last one grows weary of it; nor company so amiable and sweet, but becomes tedious in time; nor pleasure so transporting and charming, but at length gives a disgust. The greatest persons on earth sigh under the burthen of their grandeur, and are dazzled at the brightness of their own glory. When nothing afflicts them, they are afflicted of their own accord, and their most magnificent triumphs fatigue and importune them. Oftentimes their hearts groan in the midst of the greatest acclamations, and most general applause. They think themselves more unhappy than those who envy their seeming happiness; for all is not gold that glitters; the most beautiful roses are not without their prickles, and many times they hide venomous serpents.

As the glory and happiness of paradise is infinite in regard to its duration, so it is also in respect of its dignity and excellence. For there God will not only satisfy all our desires, and crown all our hopes, but he will likewise give us above all that we can either ask or think.

Shall I undertake to point out to you this transcendent glory and perfect happiness? St Paul, speaking of these gospel mysteries, tells us, That they are things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have they entered into the heart of man, 1 Cor. ii. 9. If so much hath been spoken of

the doctrine that reveals this great glory and consummate happiness, how are we able to comprehend that glory and happiness itself? Therefore the same apostle tells us in another place, That God worketh in us by his power, and doth exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, Eph. iii. 20. I cannot boast with having talked with God face to face, as Moses, Numb. xii. 8; nor of having been caught up to the third heaven, as St Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 2. God hath not carried me up, as St John, to the New Jerusalem, Rev. xxi. 10; neither hath he delivered to me, as to his holy angel, a golden reed, to measure that glorious city, Rev. xxi. 15. But when I should have enjoyed this divine colloquy, these heavenly transports, and these ravishing elevations; when I should have walked about, and taken a full view of the celestial Jerusalem; when I should have been in the company of the seraphims that fly about God's throne; when I should have beheld God, as he is, face to face; although I were the most eloquent of all men, and spoke with the tongue of angels, and had in my hand the pencil of an archangel, I should not dare to undertake to represent this exceeding glory, nor to point out to you the brightness of that heavenly light, whereof the least beam is able to dazzle me. St Paul, who was near the fountain of this living light, who had beheld the riches and glory of paradise; confessed that they are things unspeakable, which it is not lawful for a man to utter, 2 Cor. xii. 4.

But as those who cannot look directly at the sun, without having their eyes pained and dazzled by its excessive brightness, can nevertheless contemplate its lustre in the water, or in a looking-glass; so, not being able to behold the divine splendour that shines abroad in the celestial paradise, we shall consider those images and representations of it, which God himself hath been pleased to express to us in his holy word, who, in this particular, hath dealt with us as a father deals with his young children, who prattles with them, and describes to them the light of the sun with a black coal; or as the astrologers, who represent the heavenly constellations by the figures of birds, four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

For as nothing can enter into the understanding but by the door of the senses, therefore spiritual and celestial things are represented to us under the shadows of such corporal and earthly things as we love the most passionately; and because there is no one thing here below, than can express to us all the glory and happiness of paradise, so many perfections not

being to be found in any one object; therefore the Holy Ghost assembles together all the graces, virtues, and rich excellencies, that are found dispersed in nature, and borrows its ideas and images from those things that are the rarest and most glorious, and that give us the greatest pleasure and satisfaction.

To begin with the word itself, Paradise: this signifies a pleasant and delightful garden, and is made use of to express to us the joys and happiness of the life to come, and to assure us, that we shall recover, through Jesus Christ, what we have lost through Adam. Our Lord and Saviour, who is bounty itself, shall bestow upon us another Eden, another garden of delights, watered with living waters, in the midst of which is the tree of life, that yields her fruits every month, Rev. xxii. 2. Instead of an earthly paradise, subject to change, we shall find a heavenly and an unchangeable paradise. The earthly paradise is no more to be seen (some are of opinion that it was swallowed up and destroyed by the waters of the deluge); but the heavenly paradise can never be hurt by the fiercest flames, nor by the most impetuous waves. It is above all winds, storms and tempests; therefore St Peter tells us, that it is an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, 1 Pet. i. 4. It hath no need of an elemental water; for it is every where watered by a pure river of water of life, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb, Rev. xxii. 1; and whereas cherubims and a flaming sword, kept the way of the tree of life, in the earthly paradise, to hinder Adam from drawing near to it, and from gathering of its fruits, Gen. iii. 24, whole legions of angels and cherubims will carry us upon their wings to the true tree of life in the midst of the heavenly paradise; and Jesus Christ himself, the prince of all the angels, and of all the cherubims and seraphims, hath promised to admit us to taste of its delicious fruits, by these blessed words, To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God, Rev. ii. 7.

As it is customary for men to have a high esteem of beautiful and large cities, whereof the buildings are stately, and the inhabitants numerous; and as the Jews, in particular, were wont to glory in Jerusalem, and to call it, The perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth, Lam. ii. 15; Psal. xlviii. 2; therefore the Holy Ghost represents to us the glory and happiness of paradise under the figure of a city, which he also names Jerusalem. This comparison is used by the apostle, in the 11th chapter of the Hebrews: for, after hav-

ing talked of the patriarch Abraham, and told us, That by faith he had sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise, ver. 9, he adds, for he looked for a city, which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, ver. 10; and a little after, Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city, ver. 16; and in the 12th chapter of the same epistle, speaking to believers, he says, Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, ver. 22; and elsewhere, Here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come, chap. xiii. 14.

But God hath been pleased, not only to describe to us our future paradise under the general idea of a city, and of a Jerusalem; he hath also discovered to us its heavenly beauty, its glory and magnificence. A richer and more excellent picture cannot be conceived by the most luxuriant imagination than that which St John hath given us of this New Jerusalem, who himself had been a spectator of it, and had beheld all its rarities and wonders. For when the angel, who had in his hand a golden reed to measure this glorious city, had said unto him, Come hither, I will show thee the Bride, the Lamb's wife, Rev. xxi. 9, he immediately carried him away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed him that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, arrayed as a bride adorned for her husband, having the glory of God and his light. This faithful witness assures us, that its buildings, and the streets of this triumphant city, are all of pure gold, as it were transparent glass; its foundations are of precious stones; its twelve gates are twelve pearls, at each of which stands an angel of God. This holy city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it: for the glory of God enlightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. There is no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it.

It is our delight to dwell in fine and stately houses, and in rich and magnificent palaces; therefore paradise is represented to us as a house and a palace which God hath built with his own hands. This is the picture which the royal prophet sets before us in the 65th Psalm, when he speaks of God's house, and of the courts of his holy temple, ver. 4. Likewise, the apostle, in the 5th chapter of the second epistle to the Corinthians, when he saith, For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have

a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, ver. 1; and our Saviour himself, when he was ready to leave the world, comforts his apostles with these blessed words, In my Father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you, John xiv. 2. And St John heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God, Rev. xxi. 3.

There are few persons but what desire to be rich; and there are some that esteem it their chief happiness. Therefore the Holy Spirit represents the joys of heaven under the similitude of riches and treasures. Our Saviour himself speaks of it after this manner in the 6th chapter of his gospel according to St Matthew, Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal, ver. 19, 20. And the Holy Ghost hath the same in view, when describing heaven, he makes mention of gold, pearls and precious stones.

And because men are, for the most part, very ambitious after honours, titles and dignities; and because there is nothing in the world that dazzles the eye with more lustre than sceptres and crowns; therefore the glory of heaven is expressed by a kingdom, by thrones, crowns and triumphs. It is thus our Saviour speaks of it to his apostles, Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me, Luke xxii. 28, 29; and to his church in general; Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom, Luke xii. 32; and we are assured, that at the last day, he will express himself in this manner, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, Matt. xxv. 34; to the angel of the church in Smyrna, and consequently to all the faithful, this blessed Saviour maketh this rich and glorious promise, Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life, Rev. ii. 10; and unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans, To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne, Rev. iii. 21; and St Paul tells us, that we run to obtain an incorruptible crown, 1 Cor. ix. 25; and when he saw himself at the end of his

course, he cries out, I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto them also that love his appearing, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8; and St James uses the same metaphorical language, Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him, chap. i. 12. Finally, we read, that the glorified saints have palms in their hands, and on their heads crowns of gold; and that in their song of praise they speak thus to our Saviour: Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto God, kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth, Rev. v. 9, 10.

Most persons of distinction in the world delight in gorgeous apparel, and some even perfume their garments; therefore the Holy Ghost, in condescension to this weakness, promiseth us in heaven robes more fragrant than the perfumes of Arabia; a garment whiter than the snow, and brighter than light itself. And Solomon, when he considers his spouse as the type of the church; after saying, The King's daughter is all glorious within, adds, her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needle-work, Psal. xlv. 13, 14; and God himself, speaking of the glory of his church, which he begins now, and will perfect hereafter, saith, that he hath decked her with gold and silver, and precious ornaments, and that he hath clothed her with fine linen, and silk, and broidered work, Ezek. xvi.; therefore she cries out, I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels, Isa. lxi. 10. Take notice of those that stand before the throne of God, and before the Lamb, and serve him day and night in his temple, you shall find them clothed with long robes, made white in the blood of the Lamb, Rev. vii. Cast your eyes upon that glorious woman, who is the type and figure of the church, and you shall see her clothed with the sun, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars, Rev. xii. 1. In a word, hearken to the song of the glorified saints, and you shall hear them saying one to another, Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to the Lord our God, for the

marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready, and to her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints, Rev. xix. 7, 8.

Men commonly love good cheer, and delight in generous entertainments; therefore the joys of heaven are represented to us under the similitude of delicious meats and exquisite drinks, of sumptuous feasts and magnificent banquets. In this manner, the royal prophet speaks of them in the 36th Psalm, How excellent is thy loving kindness, O Lord! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house: and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures, ver. 7, 8; and in Psal. lxv. 4, Blessed is the man whom thou chooseth to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple. The prophet Isaiah uses the same figure: In this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined, chap. xxv. 6. This consideration likewise caused a doctor in the gospel to cry out, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God, Luke xiv. 15; and our Saviour himself saith, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, Matt. viii. 11. King Ahasuerus's feast continued a hundred and fourscore days, Esther i. 4; but the feast which we shall celebrate in heaven, and which hath been prepared from the foundation of the world, shall continue through all eternity.

Of all feasts, such as are for nuptial solemnities are usually the most splendid, especially when they are for the kings and princes of the earth; the rejoicings on such occasions being the greatest and most extraordinary: therefore the happiness of heaven is figured to us by a marriage. Our Saviour himself makes use of this comparison in the 22d chapter of his gospel according to St Matthew: The kingdom of heaven, saith he, is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, ver. 2. This caused the glorified church to cry out in the above mentioned triumphant manner, Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to the Lord our God; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, Rev. xix. 7. Finally, the Holy Ghost hath commanded us to write down and engrave these words in the temple of eternity,

Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb, Rev. xix. 9.

Many persons take a great delight in music, and are even ravished with the sweet harmony of the concording sounds; therefore the Holy Spirit, to inculcate to us that heaven abounds in all manner of pleasures, not only tells us, that in that blessed abode, there are millions of angels and glorified saints, but also represents them as standing about the throne of God, and singing forth his divine praise; and even acquaints us with somewhat of the substance of their celestial hymns. The prophet Isaiah, speaking of those wonderful seraphims, that fly round about God's glorious throne, informs us, that one cries unto another, and says, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory, Isa. vi. 3; and the apostle St John, describing to us those triumphant saints that stand before this magnificent throne, tells us, that they play upon their harps, and sing a new and most excellent song; that they have always in their mouths the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb, and that heaven resounds with their sacred hallelujah, or allelujah; which signifies praise to God, or celebrate the praises of God.

There is no one of an ingenuous nature, but loves peace and rest; for which reason, the glory and happiness of paradise is represented to us under this lovely and pleasing idea, as in the 4th chapter of the Hebrews, We which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, I have sworn, that they should enter into my rest. For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterwards have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God: for he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest. This caused old Simeon to cry out, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, Luke ii. 29. Finally, the holy city is called Jerusalem, which signifies the vision of peace; and God himself makes it this rich promise, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, Isa. lxvi. 12. If the peace which God grants to believing souls in this life passeth all understanding, Phil. iv. 7, what will be the full enjoyment of this eternal peace in the kingdom of heaven! Neither the tongues of men nor angels, are able to express its dignity and excellence.

Lastly. Because men are lovers of pleasure, recreation, and pomp, and seek, for the most part, to drive away care, and to enjoy themselves; the happiness of paradise is repre-

sented to us by pleasures, rejoicings and eternal triumphs, as in Psal. xxxvi. 8, Thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures; and in Psal. cxxvi. 5, They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy. And God himself, speaking of that most blessed time, saith by his prophet, Behold I create new heavens, and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be you glad, and rejoice for ever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy, Isa. lxv. 17, 18. Therefore, when the Holy Ghost represents to us the state of the glorified saints, he not only declares, that God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and that there shall be no more death, nor crying, nor pain, and that sorrow and mourning shall flee away; but he also adds, that in their mouths there shall be songs of praise, and upon their heads everlasting joy, as a precious crown, which shall never be taken from them, Rev. xxi.; Isa. li. For this cause they so earnestly excite and animate one another to this glorious and triumphant joy, in the above quoted words, Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honour to the Lord our God, Rev. xix. 7.

All our senses shall partake in these heavenly and ever-during pleasures. Our eyes shall behold, with transports of joy, the sacred countenance of our Redeemer; the riches and wonderful beauties of his palace; the glory and magnificence of his kingdom. Our ears shall be ravished with the music of the blessed saints, the sweet melody of angels, and the unspeakable harmony of the church triumphant. Our smelling shall rejoice in the sweet perfumes of the bridegroom, Cant. i., whose garments smell of myrrh, Psal. xlv. 8, and in the grateful odours of his vine always blooming, Cant. ii. Our taste shall be satisfied by the bread of angels, the hidden manna, the fruits of the tree of life, the waters springing up into everlasting life, and the new wine of the kingdom of heaven. Our arms shall embrace the Saviour of the world, and our feet shall walk about the streets of the golden city, the heavenly Jerusalem, and we shall follow the Lamb, whithersoever he goeth, Rev. xiv. 4.

Although I speak to you in this manner, I persuade myself, Christian souls, that you plainly perceive, that both these expressions, and all others of the same nature, are not to be understood according to the letter; they are but dark shadows and imperfect images of the good things of the life to come. You have not forgot what I before quoted from the apostle, That eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered

into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him, 1 Cor. ii. 9; and that this great God, whose treasures are inexhaustible, doth in us, exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think, Eph. iii. 20. So that when you set before you every thing that is the most beautiful, the most lovely, the most glorious, and the most pompous in the world, you must confess within yourselves, without doubt, the happiness of heaven is infinitely above all this. It is so far above all earthly enjoyments, and so much surpasses the most elevated thoughts and conceptions of man, that it is utterly impossible to describe it in its proper colours, or to paint it to the imagination as it really is.

Expect not, therefore, Christian souls, to meet in heaven with a paradise resembling your gardens; nor with flowers like to those that enamel and adorn your parterres; nor with fruits like to them that hang upon your trees: assure yourselves that God will show you things infinitely more pleasing and delightful, and more permanent. Fancy not to find there a city built like ours, which shall really be enriched with silver and gold, pearls and precious stones; but hope for something more noble and magnificent, than all the richest and most stately cities in the world, where God will cause you to see, not only the beauty of silver, the purity of gold, the whiteness of pearls, and the bright lustre of precious stones, but also, something far more beautiful and pure, a more perfect white, a greater brightness, and a more ravishing lustre. Think not to receive any material crown, or to sit upon thrones like to those of the kings and princes of the earth, but aspire after something more glorious, and which cannot be shaken.

I am also persuaded, Christian friends, that you expect not in heaven to find tables covered as those of the rich men of the world, nor to pamper yourselves with feasts, like those prepared for the nuptials of earthly princes. Without doubt your faith hath in view something more glorious and magnificent; your soul hungers for more exquisite meats, and thirsts for more delicious drinks; you are too well instructed to think to live in heaven an animal and sensual life; such a gross and carnal conceit is only fit for the imaginary paradise of the impostor Mahomet.

In this life that we live upon earth, there are two things that manifestly prove our natural infirmity. The first is our eating and drinking, which are absolutely necessary to make up the breaches caused by labour, and the natural heat that spend and feed upon the radical moisture, which serves as

oil to maintain the lamp of life. The other is marriage, instituted by God for the preservation of the human race. But in paradise our life shall be altogether angelical, spiritual and heavenly. Our bodies shall no longer be subject to corruption or alteration, and shall have no more want of food than the stars and the other celestial bodies. Accordingly, the Holy Spirit expressly tells us, That we shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on us, nor any heat, Rev. vii. 16. That is to say, as we shall no longer lie under a necessity to eat and drink, so the most scorching heats, and the fiercest flames shall have no power to hurt our bodies, when they shall have put off all sensual and earthly qualities, and shall be clothed with light and glory. Likewise, there shall be no need of propagating the species, or of multiplying persons by marriage; for besides, that we shall be free from the passions of flesh and blood, the number of the elect shall be complete, the congregation of the saints shall be full, and the building of the church shall be perfectly accomplished. Therefore our Saviour Jesus Christ tells us, That in the kingdom of heaven, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven, Matt. xxii. 30. We shall enjoy the light of their understanding, the sanctity of their wills, and the purity of their affections.

When the queen of Sheba saw all the glory and magnificence of king Solomon, and heard the wisdom of his discourses, she was ravished with admiration, and said to this great prince, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land, of thy acts, and of thy wisdom. Howbeit, I believed not the words, until I came, and my eyes had seen it: behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom, 1 Kings, x. 6, 7, 8. I am persuaded, believing souls, that something like to this shall happen to ourselves, when we shall come to the heavenly Jerusalem, and shall behold our Lord Jesus Christ in person, of whom Solomon was but a type and figure, having but a small spark of his glory, a faint ray of his infinite wisdom. Then ravished with more than human admiration, and, as it were, transported out of ourselves, we shall say to this peaceable king, who is crowned with a heavenly rainbow, O triumphant Monarch! all that I have heard, all that I ever imagined of thy wisdom and glory, the rich beauties and precious delights of thy paradise, is more than true: it is not the thou-

sandth part of that which I see this day. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, they will be still praising thee, Psal. lxxxiv. 4. Blessed are they that behold thy glorious face, and that hear the words of thy divine wisdom. The queen of Sheba, after a short stay in Solomon's court, returned into her own country; but when we have once entered into the glory and happiness of paradise, we shall never depart from thence; we shall behold continually this glorious King of Kings, and shall hear, with perpetual transports, the divine words of his adorable wisdom; we shall not only be with him for ever and ever, but we shall always be in him, and he in us.

To take from our minds all carnal and worldly ideas, the glory and happiness of paradise is represented to us by the image and similitude of light, as in the 12th chapter of the revelation of the prophet Daniel, ver. 3. They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever. And in Matt. xxiii. 43, our Saviour expressly saith, That the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

Finally. It is promised to us, as the highest glory and happiness of heaven, that we shall stand before the throne of God, that we shall sit with Jesus Christ upon his throne, and that we shall see his face. St John, in Rev. xxii. 3, 4, speaks in this manner; where, describing the new Jerusalem, he tells us, That the throne of God and of the Lamb are in it, and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads.

When we look upon the sun, our faces become not brighter nor more luminous; nay, many times our eyes are dazzled thereby, our skin becomes darker, and more swarthy; but when we look upon God in his love and grace, we are altogether lightened, Psal. xxxiv. 5, and become bright and shining. We have an instance of this in the prophet Moses, when he came down from the holy mountain; the skin of his face shone, so that the children of Israel were afraid to come nigh him, Exod. xxxiv. 30. If therefore this faithful servant over God's house had such a shining countenance, by his continuing with God upon an earthly mountain, during the space of forty days and forty nights, and by a sight of some small expressions of his glory; what, think ye, will be our light, and the brightness of our countenances, when we shall be exalted above the highest heavens, to converse with God, and to behold his face forty thousand millions of

ages? And yet that shall be but the beginning of this most blessed contemplation which shall never end.

When we cast our eyes upon a beautiful person, we become neither more beautiful nor more happy; nothing but an unprofitable idea remains, and many times that also quickly vanishes. But when we look upon God, we shall become like him; and in this divine likeness, we shall find the fulness of joy, of happiness and glory. This is what the royal prophet teaches us in Psal. xvi., O God! in thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore, ver. 11; and in Psal. xvii., As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness, ver. 15; and the beloved disciple of the Beloved of the Father, whose writings breathe seraphic love, gives us the same assurance: Beloved, saith he, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is, 1 John iii. 2.

You see, therefore, Christian souls, to what an exalted state of glory and happiness we have a right to pretend. For in heaven, God will not only make us shine forth as the sun and the stars, and clothe us with the brightness of the glorified saints and angels; but he also promises to make us like to himself. He shall not only satisfy us with the fatness of his house, cause us to drink of the rivers of his pleasures, fill us with his riches, enlighten us with his brightness, clothe us with his honours, and crown us with his glory; but he himself will become our meat and our drink, our treasure, our sun and our glory; and if I may so speak, to satisfy and make us completely happy, God will, as it were, dissolve himself into rivers and seas of divine and unspeakable pleasures. But that I may not be misunderstood by too bold a metaphor, it shall suffice me to say with St Paul, That God will be all in all, 1 Cor. xv. 28, that is to say, he will dwell and make his abode in us, in respect to his essence; and will cause us to feel in us his glorious presence, in as great a measure as a finite and limited nature, such as ours, is capable of. What the Jews fabled concerning the manna, which their fathers fed on in the wilderness, may be justly applied to Almighty God, as he intends to communicate himself to us in heaven. There is no taste, but shall be satisfied, no desire, but shall be fulfilled: nay, we may go farther, for he shall not only be our meat and our drink, but, as we have already observed, our light, and our clothing, and all that

we can ask or imagine. In a word, we shall enjoy in him beyond all that we can think or desire.

The knowledge of spiritual and heavenly things, which we attain to here below, is like the light at day-break; but that which we shall enjoy hereafter, shall be like that of the sun, when it shines in its full strength; or to speak in the words of the apostle, Now we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face, 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10, 12. Whilst we continue in this life, God discovers to us only the skirts of his wisdom, and but a little portion is heard of him, Job xxvi. 14. But in the life to come, he shall reveal to us the depth of his glorious mysteries, which the angels desire to look into, 1 Pet. i. 12, and shall be to our understandings as a sun, to chase away all mists, and to enlighten them for ever. At present, our will hath its imperfections, and oftentimes rebels against God; but then it shall be perfectly sanctified and reformed, according to the image of God. It shall be inflamed with his zeal, and burn with his charity. It shall sigh after nothing but his glory, and wish for nothing but a conformity to his holy will. It shall not only obey him without resistance or reluctance, but shall fly with a sacred ardour, and be all on fire, to execute his divine commands. Whilst we remain in the fetters of this infirm and sinful flesh, there is always some filth and impurity in our affections; but when we shall come to the state of glory, God will sanctify them in such a manner by his presence, that they shall be more pure than the stars or the sun-beams; they shall be nothing but celestial fires, and flames of divine love, proceeding from the face of God himself. In a word, this being of beings, who is perfection itself, this origin of all beauty, this object so exceeding glorious and lovely, shall ravish us in such a manner, that our understanding shall be continually employed in beholding him; our wills and affections in loving and embracing him; and all the faculties of our souls in uniting ourselves to him, and being transformed into his likeness.

It shall be after this manner, that we shall be made partakers of the divine nature (for we must not imagine that we shall be made partakers of the essence of God itself; for this divine essence is indivisible, and uncommunicable to the creature; so that nothing can possess it that is not God). God, who is holy, shall imprint in our souls the image of his holiness, and of all his adorable perfections; and show-

ing himself to us as he is, he will cause us to become like him, by the irradiation of his glorious countenance.

It may be you will inquire, whether we shall see God, and how we shall behold him? This question is too rich and considerable not to be examined with a holy and religious attention; and I am persuaded, Christian friends, that you will not be displeased not only to hear my opinion, but that of the Holy Scriptures, from whence we draw all our instructions, as from their only fountain.

Some scruple not to affirm, that God cannot be seen, either in this life, or in that which is to come; and it must be confessed, that their reasons are very strong and weighty. For, first, God is invisible in his nature; and this quality is often ascribed to him by the sacred writers: as in Hebrews xi., where the apostle saith, That Moses, by faith, saw him who is invisible, ver. 27; and in the 1st chapter of the first epistle to Timothy, Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory, for ever and ever, Amen, ver. 17. Secondly, We read in the 33d chapter of Exodus, that when Moses said unto God, I beseech thee, show me thy glory, God answered him, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. Thirdly, St John, in the first chapter of his gospel, hath these words: No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him, ver. 18. Lastly, the apostle St Paul seems to remove all doubt; for, not content with saying, That God only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, he adds, nor can see, 1 Tim. vi. 16.

Others, on the contrary, teach us, that God may be seen in this life, but that in the life to come he shall be seen more perfectly. What confirms them in this opinion is, first, That God himself, by his Holy Spirit, hath begot in the hearts of all his children an earnest desire of seeing his face; and that in this contemplation they place their greatest happiness and glory. Such is the earnest wish of the man after God's own heart, in the 4th Psalm, There be many that say, who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us, ver. 6; and in Psal. xlii., My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? ver. 2. Such also is the desire of the prophet Asaph in Psalm lxxx., Cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved, ver. 7. Secondly, we have heard David say, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be

satisfied with thy likeness, Psal. xvii. 15; and St Paul assures us, That we shall see God face to face, 1 Cor. xiii. 12; and St John, That we shall see God as he is, 1 John iii. 2. Thirdly, In the 12th chapter of Numbers, God spake these words to Aaron and Miriam, who had murmured against their brother Moses, If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold. Lastly, we have heard the voice from heaven, which, describing to us the blessed estate of the glorified, expressly saith, That they shall see the face of God, Rev. xxii. 4.

If it is lawful for me to attempt this high meditation, which is above the capacity of men and angels, I will declare to you in a few words, how it may be said that we shall see God, and in what sense it is impossible to behold him. But, first, we must lay down two or three distinctions, which being well understood, will remove the principal difficulties.

First. God may be considered in three several respects, 1st, As he is in himself, and in his proper essence. It is in this respect that our souls long for him, desire to approach him, and to be united to him, as to their sovereign good, and the inexhaustible fountain of glory and happiness. 2dly, As he manifests himself here on earth, by certain signs and tokens of his favourable presence. And 3dly, As he shall manifest himself in heaven by the magnificent symbols and glorious marks of his divine presence.

Secondly. We must distinguish the several kinds of sight: for there is a sight of the body, which only sees those objects, whereof the images and species are within the reach and capacity of the eye-sight; as, for example, light and colours. There is also a sight of the understanding, which sees and beholds things that are at a distance from our senses, as the spiritual and invisible substances, and the essential forms of bodies. There is likewise the sight of faith, which riseth yet higher than that of the understanding, even while we make our abode here below; and being enlightened by God's grace, sees and beholds things which the eye of the body never saw, and the understanding of sensual and carnal men can never comprehend, as the mysteries of the Christian religion, and the powers of the world to come.

Lastly. We must distinguish the knowledge of the under-

standing; for sometimes it is obscure and confused, and at other times clear and distinct. Again, that which is the most clear and distinct, is of two sorts. The one hath bounds and limits proportioned to its subject; that is to say, to the reach and capacity of the understanding; the other is absolute, and of the same extent as its object; that is to say, as the thing itself, which the understanding conceives and beholds.

God, as he is in himself, and in his own essence, hath never been seen by the eye of the body, and never shall be seen, either in this life, or in that which is to come; for God is a Spirit, John iv. 24, and of an invisible nature; and in this sense it is the apostle tells us, that God dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen or can see, 1 Tim. vi. 16. But this God of mercies, who of himself is invisible, delights to show himself to his creatures by several ways.

First. God shows himself, in some measure to all men, in the works of the creation of the world. For as St Paul saith, in the 1st chapter of his epistle to the Romans, The invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, ver. 20. Particularly, he hath been pleased to give us light; which is, as it were, his eldest daughter, the first of all visible productions, and the image and resemblance of himself. For as there is nothing more simple, purer, and more beautiful, than the light; so there is nothing visible in the creation that better represents this great God, who is a being most uncompounded, most pure and most beautiful, the Father of lights, and the true sun of our souls.

Secondly. God shows himself by all the works of his adorable providence, and chiefly in his extraordinary and miraculous operations. For when men perceive works which surpass all the ordinary strength of nature, they are forced to acknowledge, that they proceed immediately from an infinite power. As Pharaoh's magicians, when they found that, by all their magical arts, they were not able to counterfeit Moses's miracle, cried out, This is the finger of God, Exod. viii. 19.

Thirdly. God reveals himself to us in his holy and divine word, which is, as it were, a beautiful and perfect mirror, wherein we may see his image, and the brightness of his glory. This was St Paul's thought, when he saith, that we all with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

Fourthly. God showed himself to the church of Israel by the ark, the sign and ordinary token of his presence. He spoke to his people from the midst of his two golden cherubims, and delivered to them his oracles. He was also pleased to reveal himself to them in divers representations; particularly in the cloud, and the pillar of fire which came down miraculously from heaven. Hence it is, that the sign taking the name of the thing signified, the ark, is sometimes styled God; as in that passage where David saith, My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? Psal. xlii. 2.

Fifthly. God manifested himself to the patriarchs and prophets in dreams and visions, by ecstacies, transports and prophetical elevations. In this manner he appeared to the patriarch Jacob at Bethel; for when it is said, that the Lord stood upon that mystical ladder set upon the earth, whose top reached to heaven, Gen. xxviii., without doubt it is meant, that he gave some sign and testimony of his presence. The prophet Isaiah, speaking of this glorious vision, makes no difficulty to say, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims, each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke, chap. vi. And the prophet Micaiah, declaring his vision, saith, I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the hosts of heaven standing by him, on his right hand and on his left, 1 Kings xxii. 19. And the prophet Daniel, describing one of his visions speaks in the same manner: I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued, and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him, chap. vii. 9, 10.

Sixthly. God showed himself to Moses in a manner altogether particular, not only when he appeared to him in Horeb, and spoke to him from the midst of the flame of the burning bush; but more especially when he showed himself to him in the holy mountain, and for the space of forty days and forty nights, conversed with him familiarly, as a friend

with his friend. For at that time he set before his eyes such glorious and magnificent tokens of his presence, that it was in some measure the same thing as if he had seen God himself. God gave him more light and knowledge of his glory, than he ever vouchsafed to any other of his prophets, and talked with him in a more familiar manner, than to any other person that ever lived. It is because of the glory of these extraordinary tokens of his presence, the brightness of that light which beamed into Moses's soul, and the holy familiarity of this divine colloquy, that God speaks of it in those words which we quoted in the 12th chapter of the book of Numbers: for we must not understand that passage in a literal sense, that Moses actually saw God himself, and that with the eyes of the body he beheld his essence, which is altogether invisible; but the meaning is, that no person ever saw, with the eyes of the body, such glorious tokens of the Godhead; no person ever conversed so familiarly with God; and that no person ever had such a clear and distinct knowledge of his sovereign glory and divine majesty.

Seventhly. God hath often appeared to men in a human shape, and hath given them such evident testimonies of his sacred presence, that such as have seen the image, made no scruple to affirm, that they had seen God. It is in this manner that the patriarch Jacob speaks after he had wrestled with a human body, moved, not only by an angel, who was the formal assistant, but by God himself, who was the first mover, and displayed there his divine influence, I have seen, saith he, God face to face, and my life is preserved, Gen. xxxii. 30. Manoah, the father of Sampson, speaks to the same purpose, when he had seen the human shape in which God had appeared unto him, and which ascended up into heaven in the flame of his burnt-offering. We shall surely die, because we have seen God, Judges xiii. 22. In the like manner, when God appeared to Abraham in the shape of a man, this man is styled the Lord, and Abraham bowed himself before him, and worshipped. I am sensible that this holy patriarch saw no less than three human shapes, which appeared to him at once. Some think that God was visible but in one of these shapes, and that the two others were animated by two angels. What confirms this opinion is, that of these three persons, there is but one that speaks as God, and whom Abraham worships; who disappearing, the other two are styled angels, in the beginning of the 19th chapter. But others believe, with some ancient doctors of the church, that these three human shapes were a true image,

and lively figure of the most holy, most glorious, and most adorable Trinity. In this opinion, there is nothing contrary to the unity of faith.

Lastly. God hath shown himself to the world in a very extraordinary manner, in the person of his Son, who is therefore called, by way of excellence, the image of God, 2 Cor. iv. 4. The image of the invisible God, Col. i. 15, and God manifest in the flesh, 1 Tim iii. 16. God hath not only imprinted in him some tokens of his Godhead and infinite power; he does not simply cause him to act and move, as the borrowed bodies mentioned in the Old Testament; he hath not only engraven in him the perfect image of all his divine perfections; he is not in him in a shadow or type, as he was in the ark, and in Solomon's temple; but he dwelleth in him, as to his essence itself, and his eternal Godhead, as the apostle informs us, In him dwelleth bodily (that is to say, personally and essentially) all the fulness of the Godhead, Col. ii. 9; wherefore our Saviour tells St Philip, He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father, John xiv. 9.

These things being thus premised, let us now consider, how we may be said to see God here on earth, and how we shall see him in heaven. At present, we see him with the eyes of the body in his visible works; and we also behold him in his essence, with the eyes of our understanding, but with a very weak and imperfect sight. We know him, but it is in a very confused and obscure manner. Therefore, in this respect, St Paul saith very truly and well, That we know in part, and we prophesy in part, 1 Cor. xiii. 9. We also see God with the eye of faith; for it is with this eye that we see with Moses, him who is invisible, Heb. xi. 27; and that we behold our Lord Jesus Christ, sitting at the right hand of God the Father, above all principalities and powers, and sovereignly adored by all the church triumphant.

In paradise we hope to see, with the eyes of our glorified bodies, such bright magnificent images of the divinity, tokens so full of majesty and glory, that in comparison of it, whatsoever formerly appeared to the prophets and patriarchs in their most illustrious visions, was nothing but obscurity and darkness; with these eyes of the body we shall likewise behold God in the person of our Saviour, who is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, Heb. i. 3; so that we may well cry out with Job, in all the confidence of faith, I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he

shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me, Job. xix. 25, 26, 27.

But as for the essence of God himself, and his eternal Godhead, we shall not see it, nor can we ever behold it with the eyes of the body, let it become never so glorious, incorruptible and immortal. Nor shall we see it with the eyes of faith; for then faith shall be put away, and we shall not walk by faith, but by sight, 2 Cor. v. 7. But we shall see God with the eyes of our understanding, enlightened by the light of glory. Now, as we have already observed, there are two sorts of contemplation and knowledge; the one perfect, proportioned to the object which we behold or look upon; the other imperfect and limited, proportioned to the subject that looks or sees. Our future contemplation and knowledge of God shall not be of the first, but of the latter kind; that is to say, we shall never see into the bottom of the mysterious depths of God's majesty and glory. We shall never perfectly know this supreme perfection, this infinite being, this immense and incomprehensible Godhead. For things are in their operations, as they are in their beings and abilities. Now in our most glorious and triumphant state, our beings will always be limited and circumscribed; therefore it is absolutely impossible, that we should ever perfectly comprehend the divine essence, which is infinite in itself, and in all its adorable perfections. The holy angels themselves, the cherubims and seraphims, who are represented to us as all light and fire, are not able to penetrate to the bottom of these eternal depths, nor to approach this infinite light. In a word, it belongs only to God himself to comprehend and understand perfectly, the immense glory and sovereign perfections of the Godhead.

But though our sight cannot penetrate into the bottom of these divine depths, though we shall never be able to comprehend perfectly this infinite being; nevertheless we hope to behold openly this wonderful object, and to obtain as much knowledge of it as shall be requisite to render us completely happy. For as when our eye beholds the sun at noon-day, it neither receives, nor is able to receive all its beams, but it receives as many as are necessary to enlighten it; and though there should be a thousand suns, it could neither partake of more light nor more brightness: thus in beholding the Father of lights, the beautiful sun of souls, it is altogether im-

possible that we should receive the immensity of his rays; but we shall receive as many as shall be necessary to dispel all our darkness, and to fill us full of perfect light, to make us become light in the Lord, and to cause us to shine forth for ever as so many stars or little suns; or, as an empty vessel, when it is plunged into the sea, comprehends not all its waters, but receives only enough to fill it up, so that there remains no part empty; in like manner, when we shall be plunged into the ocean of the Godhead, we shall not be able to comprehend and receive such infinite glory and happiness; but we shall receive and comprehend as much as shall content our desires, and satisfy our most craving appetites; insomuch, that there shall be nothing wanting to complete the highest felicity of a human creature.

I say not the highest felicity absolutely and without restriction; for there are two sorts of felicities. The one absolutely perfect, beyond which nothing can be imagined: this felicity or happiness is only to be found in God. The other perfect in a certain degree; as the perfect happiness of angels is, to attain to that degree of glory, of which the angelical nature is capable; likewise the perfect happiness of man is, to enjoy all that blessedness of which the human nature alone is susceptible. I say the human nature alone, to distinguish it from that which is united to the person of the eternal Son of God; for by this union it hath attained to an incommunicable glory, of which other creatures cannot partake, far above whatever the children of God, and the holy angels, can or may expect.

Moreover, there is a supreme and independent happiness, which subsists of itself, without any foreign aid. This kind of happiness is only to be found in God: for as he is an infinite being, who exists of himself, without borrowing from another, so he is perfectly happy of his essence. The other happiness is that which proceeds, not from ourselves, but is derived to us from another; such is the glory and happiness of the angels. This the Holy Ghost teacheth us in these words, God putteth light into his angels; that is to say, these holy spirits have nothing of light or glory in them, but what is derived to them from the gracious countenance of the Father of lights. Such also is the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, as mediator: therefore he speaks thus to God the Father, Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee, John xvii. 1. In a word, such shall be our glory and happiness; for as we have our being from God, so it is from him that we have our well-being, from him alone that we must expect all our glory and bliss.

From hence it plainly appears, Christian friends, that God is the only object, and the only source of our eternal glory and happiness. If you inquire of me, what shall be the essential form? I answer, That it shall be our resemblance to God; which shall be as perfect as a human creature is capable of. Now, this resemblance shall consist in three things; in a pure and shining light, which shall not be mixed with the least obscurity; in a perfect and complete holiness, where there shall not be the least blemish; and in an infinite and unchangeable joy and content, which shall never be overcast with the least cloud of grief. But of this we have sufficiently treated already.

Some inquire, whether in paradise there shall be an equality or inequality, in glory and happiness? This question is more curious than necessary. For, without troubling our heads whether there shall be any more or less happy than ourselves, it is sufficient for our comfort to know, that if we truly believe, and are penitent, if we fear God as we ought, and serve him religiously to the end of our lives, we shall certainly attain to the glory of the children of God, and possess with them a perfect and eternal happiness. Nevertheless, that we may not omit any thing that may give satisfaction to the believing soul, I shall examine this particular; but it shall be without intruding into those things which I have not seen in the glass of the gospel, Col. ii. 18, or which I have not learned from the great physician of our souls. I shall first declare the opinion of the most learned men upon this rich and excellent subject; afterwards I shall add my own; which I submit, with the rest of this treatise, to the judgment of wiser persons, who exercise themselves in meditations upon spiritual and heavenly matters.

Some believe, that in paradise there shall be but one glory and happiness, which shall be equal and uniform in all those that enjoy it. Their principal reasons are, First. That we can have no glory and happiness, but that which hath been merited for us by the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that as this glorious Saviour hath purchased this glory and happiness for all the elect equally, so they shall all enjoy it in the highest degree of perfection. Secondly. That the holiness of all the blessed shall be perfect; therefore, as they shall be all perfectly holy, so they shall be all perfectly and sovereignly happy. Thirdly. That our Saviour saith expressly, without any exception, That the righteous shall shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father, Matt. xiii. 43. Now, the sun is king of the stars, and the brightest of

all the heavenly luminaries. Fourthly. That they are represented in heaven, as so many kings, having on their heads crowns of gold, Rev. i. 6; iv. 4; v. 10. Now, there is no inequality among kings; each of them being possessed of a sovereign glory, and independent authority. Fifthly. That Jesus Christ represents to us the transaction at the end of the world, by the parable of a father of a family, who, when even was come, gave the same hire unto every one that laboured in his vineyard, Matt. xx. Sixthly. That it is said, in general terms, That we shall see God face to face, 1 Cor. xiii. 12; and that we shall see him as he is, 1 John iii. 2; and that in this blessed vision shall consist man's principal happiness. Lastly. That after the resurrection, God shall be all in all, 1 Cor. xv. 28; which expression denotes the highest glory, and most imaginable felicity.

Others think, on the contrary, that in heaven there shall be an inequality of glory, and divers degrees of happiness. This they chiefly ground upon two passages of Holy Scripture; the one is, John xiv. 2, where Christ saith to his apostles, In my father's house are many mansions; the other, 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42, where St Paul, speaking at large of the happiness of the saints after the resurrection, saith, There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory; so also is the resurrection of the dead.

Others again, not content to believe an inequality of glory and happiness, discourse of it with as much confidence as if God had admitted them to the knowledge of his eternal secrets, or as if he had discovered to them all the wonders of the heavenly Jerusalem, more plainly than to his beloved disciple. They not only affirm, that there shall be divers degrees of glory and happiness, but they tell us who they are that shall obtain such and such degrees, and dogmatically determine what shall be the glory of virgins, what that of confessors, and what that of martyrs. In a word, some are so transported with a high opinion of themselves and their merits, that they make an open professsion of being of the number of such as shall obtain the highest degrees of glory and happiness.

But in my opinion, the truth is to be found between these two extremes; therefore, without prescribing a law to the conscience of any, in a matter whereof the decision is, in no respect, necessary to salvation, on the one hand, I say, that in heaven there shall be divers degrees of glory and happiness; but then on the other, I dare not pretend to describe

them, much less to apply them to particular persons, or to say who shall possess such and such degrees. This would be to set our mouth against the heavens, Psal. lxxiii. 9, and to lay hands upon the forbidden fruit. Instead of being serviceable to others, we should wilfully cast ourselves away; for such as are so audacious as to search into the divine Majesty, shall be swallowed up in its glory.

And though we verily believe degrees of glory, yet I hope we may observe, without offence to any person, that this opinion is not to be established upon the fore-mentioned passages, from whence no such conclusion can be drawn. For in the 14th chapter of St John, our Saviour saith, not, There are many apartments or mansions, some whereof are richer and more glorious than others; but only, In my Father's house are many mansions. The meaning of our blessed Saviour is as clear as the day; his aim was to raise up the drooping spirits of his apostles, and to comfort them on account of his absence. For this purpose he tells them, he was going to dwell in a house, where there is not only room for himself, but also for them, and for all those that shall believe in him through their ministry. Nothing can be plainer than his own exposition of these words, in the 17th chapter of the same gospel, where he speaks to God in this manner, Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me. For the other text, in 1 Cor. xv. I beseech you, devout soul, read over the apostle's words, and consider, with a religious attention, what goes before and what follows after; you shall find that the apostle had no intention to compare the saints, the one with the other, but only to manifest the difference which there is between our bodies, as they are in this corruptible and mortal life, and as they shall be when they shall have put on incorruption and immortality. Therefore, when he hath said, There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory; he doth not add, in like manner, there is one glory of the blessed saint, and another glory of another; but he saith, So also is the resurrection of the dead; it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown in a natural body, it is raised in a spiritual body.

What is it, therefore, that leads us to believe these divers degrees of glory and happiness? First. It is the considera-

tion of the different punishments of the damned: for as in hell there is a diversity of misery, and divers degrees of torments; so it is very probable, that in heaven there is a diversity of happiness, and several degrees of glory.

Secondly. God, to declare his manifold wisdom, Eph. iii. 10, bestows all his riches, and the abundance of his blessings, with a wonderful variety, and an admirable order. Thus you see in nature a rich profusion of divers gifts and excellencies. For example, the smell and beauty of the rose is different from that of the lily, the lustre of the diamond is not like that of the ruby, and the light of the sun differs from that of the moon and stars, so it is highly credible, that in the heaven of heavens there shall be divers degrees of light and glory.

Among the angels, there are distinctions of honour and dignity; whence we read of archangels, 1 Thess. iv. 16; Jude 9. Thrones, dominions, principalities and powers, Col. i. 16. As therefore, among the angels, there are several degrees of glory, it is not unlikely, that the same order shall be observed among the saints in heaven. Moreover, as in the church-militant, the graces of God are divers, the souls of the faithful being adorned with various excellencies, and endued with different degrees of light, knowledge, faith, hope, charity and holiness; thus, according to the analogy of faith, we may reasonably suppose, that in the church triumphant there shall be divers degrees of glory and happiness; and the rather, because glory is nothing else but the consummation and perfection of grace. This reason appears no where in a stronger light than in the parable of the talents, where Jesus Christ bestows upon his servants a glory proportioned to the riches of his grace. No one can imagine that the words relate to God's favours distributed to his faithful servants here upon earth; for our Lord speaks of what he intends to do when he shall come down from heaven to judge the world; at which time he shall say to him who hath improved the talent of his grace, Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord; and shall cause the unprofitable servant to be cast into outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, Matt. xxv. 23, 30.

I ought not to forget what we read on this subject, 2 Cor. ix., He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully. They are St Paul's words, which expressly declare an inequality of glory and happiness to be expected among the rewards in hea-

ven. It may be also worthy of our observation, that the felicities of heaven are represented to us by a feast, where all partake of the same meats, but some are advanced to a more honourable room than others. This, as I conceive, may be gathered from our Saviour's words: Many shall come from the east, and from the west, and shall sit down at table in the kingdom of heaven, with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It may also be understood from that other passage, where Lazarus is carried by the holy angels into Abraham's bosom. Lastly. I ground my opinion upon the 12th chapter of Daniel, where this blessed prophet, when he had spoken in general terms of the future happiness of the faithful, who shall rise to eternal life, he offers to mention some on whom God hath bestowed more light upon earth, and whose ministry he hath made use of, to bring many souls to salvation. Among these he seems to put divers degrees of glory. They that are wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that bring many to righteousness, as the stars for ever. From this text of Scripture one may apparently conclude, that as the light of the firmament differs much from that of the bright stars, and as among the stars there is a diversity of light; in like manner, there shall be divers and different degrees of glory among the blessed in heaven.

Now, in answer to that argument, That Jesus Christ hath purchased for us the glory and happiness of heaven, that therefore this glory and happiness should be equal, I confess this reason is weighty. I intend not absolutely to deny it; but I shall offer several things to the consideration of the pious and devout souls, who shall peruse this treatise. First. That although the blood of Jesus Christ hath purchased for us heaven, and that we are not able to claim it by our most regenerate action, or merit it by our most painful sufferings and martyrdom; because that, when we have performed all that is commanded, our Saviour requires us to say, We are unprofitable servants, because we have done nothing but what we are bound to do, Luke xvii.; and because his holy apostle assures us, that when all things are reckoned up, the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us, Rom. viii. Nevertheless, God is so good, merciful and bountiful, that he bears with our imperfections, and he rewards us as a father, with a free reward, all the good works of his servants, chiefly the works of charity. Therefore Jesus Christ tells his apostles, and generally all the faithful, Whosoever shall give unto you to drink a cup of water, because you are

Christ's, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward. And because it is the custom of the eastern people to warm their drink, therefore to give a cup of cold water may be reckoned the smallest assistance: our Saviour saith, Whosoever shall give unto these little ones a cup of cold *water* only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward, Matt. x. If such as bestow a cup of cold water for God's sake, are rewarded in heaven, what may not those bountiful souls expect there, who now spend their estates in charitable deeds? Besides, we have heard a prophet tell us, that all such as by the light of their doctrines, and the holiness of their lives, lead many souls to their salvation, shall shine for ever in heaven as so many bright stars. It stands with reason; for if our Saviour will, in his infinite mercy, reward such a small kindness as the gift of a draught of water to one of his children, they shall excel in glory, who spend for his sake, in his quarrel, every drop of their blood, and by their deaths confirm his holy gospel: this is a faithful saying, If we die with Jesus Christ, we shall also live with him; if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him. But that which seems to me yet stronger, and makes for this purpose, is, that all the spiritual graces which are bestowed upon us in this life proceed from the Holy Ghost, purchased for us by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by his precious blood. Now, these graces are different and various: therefore, as there are divers degrees in grace, why should there not be divers degrees in glory, since both have been purchased for us with the same price, by the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ?

The other argument drawn from the happiness and perfection of the glorified saints, is rational, but not infallible. For as several diamonds may be perfect in their kind, so that the clearest eye cannot take notice of any defect, yet nevertheless they may differ in weight and value; all the stars have their perfection and light, nevertheless one star differs from another star in glory; all the angels of heaven are perfectly happy and holy, and yet there is a great inequality amongst them in glory and dignity; likewise, although all the blessed shall attain to a perfect holiness, in my judgment, that cannot hinder the diversity of degrees of glory and happiness.

I acknowledge also, that the other objection, drawn from these words, The just shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, is not to be despised; but it concludes nothing to the purpose. For if you should cut out excellently

well some orbs of crystal, of different sizes, some greater, some less, and should put them all in the sun, they would be all full of light in every part; every one of them would represent the beautiful image of that sun that looks upon them; so that it may very well be said of them all, that they shine as the sun, nevertheless, according to their brightness and size, they receive more light, and the sun seems greater in the one than the other. To the other objection, That all the glorified saints in heaven are named kings; I answer, This is not to be understood in a literal sense, no more than when it is said, That they have on their heads crowns of gold. That I may continue in the same comparison, I may say, that all kings have a sovereign majesty; which acknowledges none above it, but God, from whom it proceeds; and nevertheless some have greater powers and riches than others; likewise all the glorified saints shall enjoy a sovereign and perfect happiness, and receive it immediately from God; but this cannot hinder them from differing from one another in glory. I answer, next, the other argument taken out of the parable of the father of a family, who, at the evening of the day, rewarded equally all his labourers that had been employed in his vineyard, giving to every one of them a penny, That parables are as pictures, or representations; in which, besides the thing intended to be drawn, there are many particulars, which serve but as flourishes to adorn the pieces. If we should consider every particular of this parable, we might conclude from hence, that among such as shall be saved, there will be some murmuring against God, who shall envy their fellow-saints, which to me appears a gross absurdity. The design of our Saviour is not to speak of the equality of the glorified saints: but his intent is to show, that those whom God calls first should not despise the others: because God, who doth with his own what he pleaseth, is able to make them equal, and to bestow upon them the same advantages. Lastly, as every one whom the good man of the house sent into his vineyard, at various times in the day, received for their wages a penny; in the same manner, whosoever God effectually calls into his church, whether it be in youth or age, nay even at the hour of death, they shall all receive from his infinite bounty eternal life; but from hence we cannot conclude any thing contrary to this truth, that in heaven there shall be different degrees of glory.

The greatest difficulty, in my judgment, lies in this allegation, That we shall see God face to face; and that he will be all in all. Nevertheless we may say, that as all the

damned in hell shall lose all sight of God, yet that cannot hinder the divers degrees of pain and torment; likewise all the glorified saints in heaven shall see God: but this sight, which all enjoy, cannot remove the inequality of their glory and happiness. As when all men look upon the same sun, but several receive the benefit of its beams in a different manner: thus we shall all behold the same God; but the gracious aspect of his countenance shall be cast upon us variously, and produce in us divers effects. We may also make use of another comparison; as when we cast many empty vessels into the same sea, they are filled up; so that it may be said of them, that the sea is in them all; yet some may be more capacious, and receive more water than others; likewise all the saints shall enter into the same wonderful ocean of the Godhead, they shall be all filled up to the brim with his glorious presence; so that God shall be all in all; nevertheless we shall receive different measures of the waters issuing forth to eternal life. In a word, as God will cast headlong all the reprobates into the same lake of fire and brimstone, and yet there shall be divers degrees among them of punishments: so God shall cause all the elect to drink out of the same river of pleasure; but there shall be a difference amongst their degrees of glory. Moreover, this passage may be thus understood: God shall be all in all; that is to say, he shall be to us all, riches, glory, light, meat, drink, pleasure, &c. In my judgment, we cannot conclude from hence, that he is to be in all equally.

If any have other thoughts, or is of a different opinion to me, I shall not offer to condemn him, nor undertake to contradict him; for I conceive, that since Almighty God hath hid the glories and happiness of heaven, and covered them over with a thick cloud, on purpose to limit our too curious inquiry, we cannot mention them with too much modesty and respect. Only I must make another remark for the comfort of devout souls, whose thoughts and minds are in heaven, that when we affirm that there shall be different degrees of glory in paradise, we must not fancy, that this shall be any prejudice to the perfect happiness of the glorified ones. For if I may once again make use of the comparison of the sunbeams, and of the waters of the sea, I cannot find any more proper for this purpose. As all eyes that look upon the clear sun, without cloud or mist, receive its rays in a different manner, yet they have all light enough to see to guide themselves, and to rejoice in this beautiful luminary that enlightens them; if some take in a great measure of that light, this

hinders not the rest from enjoying also a sufficiency: so shall it be with all the glorified souls, when they shall behold God, the Father of lights, the true sun that shall shine for ever and ever. If any of them shall have more or less of light, that shall not concern or prejudice their sovereign happiness; for every one of them shall enjoy as much as they shall be able to contain, or shall be necessary to complete their joy, and perfect their happiness. As when we cast into the sea, many empty vessels, some greater, some less, the greater contains more water, and the lesser not so much; yet they all receive enough to be filled up to the brim; if the least of these vessels had the knowledge to speak, they would not complain of the greater for containing more than they, because they have all as much as they can either desire or expect: likewise, when the saints shall be admitted into the unfathomable sea of glory and happiness, they shall be filled all up to the brim, so that they shall not be able to desire any more. They shall be all, according to their different capacities, perfectly and entirely happy. Consider, therefore, Christian soul, that if thou enjoyest so much satisfaction, delight and pleasure, as thou art capable of, although others may have something more, thou art not less happy for their overplus. There is none but God alone, who, according to the infinity of his being, possesseth an innumerable and infinite glory and happiness. This bottomless source of glory and bliss, shall for ever and ever overflow all the glorified saints in heaven, and satisfy their souls with unspeakable delights.

You may ask, Christians, in what part of the great world shall God cause us to enjoy so many rare pleasures, and heavenly contentments? Where shall he discover so much glory and splendour? In what part doth he intend to show so many divine marks of his gracious presence? I answer, that this place is above the elemental world, above all the heavens that appear before our eyes, and which roll about us. If we will understand this, we must remember, that the Holy Scripture makes mention of the three heavens. The first is the large extent of the air, distinguished by the learned into three regions: in this sense it is to be understood when it speaks of the birds of the air. The second heaven comprehends the heavenly spheres, the globes that are between the moon and the firmament, where are all the fixed stars; and if beyond this there be any other sphere, whereof the motion is so powerful and swift, as to carry with it the inferior globes, and to cause them to roll round in the space of twenty-four hours. Of this David speaks in Psalm xix.,

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy work; he hath put them in a tabernacle for the sun. Now, above all these heavenly spheres mentioned by the astronomers (some reckon up nine to ten, others more), there is yet a third heaven spoken of by St Paul, 2 Cor. xii. I know, saith he, a man in Christ, which was taken up into the third heaven: I know that he was taken up into paradise, and heard words which can not be spoken, which are not possible for man to utter. The holy apostle leaves no manner of difficulty; for the third heaven he names paradise, where he heard unspeakable words, which are not possible to be uttered.

The celestial globes roll about continually; but this third heaven, for its excellency, is styled *the heaven*, and is fixed in an eternal settlement. And as much as these beautiful orbs have a greater light and glory than the air, and the inferior bodies; so much the more doth this third heaven excel them. It is my judgment, that Solomon means this third heaven, situate above all the rest, which exceeds them so much in beauty and glory, when he speaks to God of the heavens, and of the heaven of heavens, 1 Kings viii.; that is to say, the most excellent, the highest, and the most glorious of all the heavens, are not able to contain thee; and God himself declares, by his holy prophets, The heavens are my throne, and the earth is my footstool, Isa. lxvi. For in this high heaven God hath placed his throne, where he discovers his glory, and the brightness of his luminous countenance. There the seraphims fly, and thousand thousands worship him, and ten thousand millions stand continually before him, Isa. vi.; Dan. vii. Here the blessed soul of our Saviour Christ ascended as soon as it had left the body, according to what he promised to the crucified thief, Verily I say unto thee, This day thou shalt be with me in paradise, Luke xxiii. Into this place our glorious Saviour entered, both in soul and body, after his resurrection; and here it was that St Stephen saw him, when he cried out, I see the heavens open, and Jesus Christ sitting at the right hand of God, Acts vii. And to this place the souls of all such as die in his favour are carried up. Therefore St Paul to the Hebrews mentions, immediately after the thousands of angels, the spirits of just men made perfect; and the church and congregation of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven. In short, it is the glorious seat where we hope that God will receive us, both in soul and body, at that day when we shall be taken up

into the air, above the clouds of heaven, to be ever with the Lord Jesus.

Some inquire, what shall become then of this elemental world! Whether this heaven that appears to our eyes, and this earth which sustains us, shall perish? Or whether they shall remain yet after the great day of doom?

Certain profane Atheists are persuaded, that the world shall remain for ever, as it doth at present, and that there shall be no kind of alteration. The Apostle St Peter hath prophesied of these persons, and described them in their own colours: There shall come at the last day mockers, walking after their own lust, saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers are asleep, all things continue in the same manner, since the beginning of the world. I need not trouble myself to answer such impieties, as I here speak to none but devout souls, who reverence the divinity of the Holy Scriptures, and are fully persuaded of the truth of all the articles of our creed.

When men oppose a false doctrine, they often run from one extremity to another. Therefore some imagine, that the world shall totally perish; and that as God hath made the heavens and the earth, and the rest of the elements, out of nothing, he will reduce them all again into their primitive state, and that he intends to create others more beautiful, more holy, and far more glorious. There are two sorts of expressions that seem to favour this opinion. The first speaks of the heavens and of the earth as of perishing and decaying creatures. In this manner David discourseth of them, Psal cii.; after him the apostle to the Hebrews, Thou, Lord, hath established the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands; they shall perish; but thou shalt endure; they shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed. And our Saviour tells us, in Matt. xxiv., That the heavens and the earth shall pass away; but my word shall not pass away. Especially the words of St Peter, in the second epistle, and in the third chapter, are remarkable: The heavens shall pass away with a noise; and the elements shall melt with heat; and the earth, with the works that are therein, shall be burnt up. The other passages mention new heavens, and a new earth, as in Isa. lxv. Behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth, and the former things shall be remembered no more. Likewise in 2 Pet. iii., before mentioned, We look for new heavens, and a new earth, according to his promise, wherein dwelleth righteousness. And in Rev. xxi., I saw a new hea-

ven and a new earth ; for the first heaven, and the first earth, were passed away ; and there was no more sea. Moreover, St Paul to the Hebrews speaks of the *world to come.* From hence some conclude, that the old world shall be destroyed, and that God will create a new one.

There is no man, who is a real Christian, can doubt of that wonderful change which shall happen to the world at the last day, if he considers the fore-mentioned passages of Holy Scripture ; especially that of St Peter, The heavens shall pass away with a noise, and the elements shall melt with heat ; and the earth, with the works that are therein, shall be burnt up. As the walls of Jericho fell down at the sound of the priest's trumpets, so this great world shall be overturned at the blast of the archangel's trumpet. Our reason alone, being enlightened by divine revelation, seems to confirm this truth ; for since the house infected with a spreading leprosy was to be demolished, how much rather ought the world to be destroyed, because, in it are to be seen apparently the spots and blemishes of sin, which may emphatically be called a spiritual leprosy.

But though the great fabric of this world must be ruined, and turned upside down, yet we do not believe that it shall be reduced to nothing. Its qualities shall be changed, and, it may be, its form shall be altered ; but its substance and matter shall continue always the same. For, first, as God hath created the world for his own glory, he cannot be for ever disappointed of the intent of his creation; and because this world hath not glorified him as it ought, he will put it into a condition proper to glorify him, answerable to the purpose for which he drew it out of nothing. Secondly, Since this world was created to serve man, as a looking-glass, to behold the eternal power of God, and that this beautiful looking-glass hath been spotted and sullied by sin ; it is yet possible to cleanse it, and make it brighter, that it might represent its Creator better, and show forth a more perfect image of his divine Majesty. Thirdly, Since God doth nothing in vain, there is no likelihood that he should destroy the world totally, and reduce the primitive matter to nothing, from whence it was drawn, to create new matter, because he is able of this old matter to make a new earth and a new heaven, as pure and undefiled as if the matter had been newly created. Fourthly, Sin hath spoiled and disfigured the works of the creation ; but it hath not touched either the first matter or its being ; so that God can take away this defilement, and remove this deformity without touching the

matter, which of itself is innocent. In man, the little world, and the compendium of the great, I find a beautiful and perfect image of that which God will do with the whole world. God intends not to destroy the substance of souls, but only to purge them from all vicious qualities, and beautify them with righteousness and true holiness, so that they shall be as the angels in heaven; likewise he intends not to destroy the substance of our bodies, but he will free them from corruption, from death, and clothe them with glory and immortality; so that this vile body shall be rendered conformable to the glorious body of the Son of God, and shall shine as the sun: so God will not altogether destroy the world, and abolish its substance, but he will rectify all its imperfections, and add to it a greater glory. If it be lawful for me to discover here all my thoughts, I must say, that I put a greater difference between heaven and earth; for the earth is altogether corrupt and defiled with sin; it is the earth chiefly that groans under the burthen of so many iniquities, which reign in it; but if heaven is guilty of any crime, it is because it hath given light to such as have been rebels against the divine Majesty, and assisted the cursed earth by its favourable influences. Because of this great difference, it is my opinion, that the earth shall be destroyed by fire; and that all its beautiful buildings and proud palaces shall be turned into ashes. But the change which shall happen in heaven shall only be to make it more beautiful and brighter, that the children of God may have there a more glorious palace. This seems to have been typified in the ceremonial law; for as we have already observed, speaking of that which shall happen to the soul and body, that when an earthen vessel was defiled, it was to be broken to pieces; but such vessels as were of a more precious metal, as of brass, or of silver, or of gold, were to be purified with fire; likewise the earth, with all its works, shall pass through the flames, so that it shall lose its present shape and qualities. But heaven, that is as brass, or rather as fine silver, shall only be purified by the fire of the last judgment. If you remove the cause, you take away also the effect; if you remove away sin, you also remove its punishment. Now it is because of man's sin, that the world hath and shall undergo so great a change. Therefore, as God by his infinite mercy, hath forgiven man's sin, it is also to be expected from the same mercy, that he will not totally destroy the world, but that he will rather free it from corruption, unto which our sin hath made it subject.

Unless God deals in this manner, our joy and comfort

seems not complete, and God appears not perfectly satisfied and reconciled. While a subject continues in rebellion, and in the displeasure of his prince, not only his person is pursued and punished, but all that belong to him bear the marks of wrath and indignation of the prince whom he hath offended. His dwelling house is commonly pulled down, his woods are cut and mangled, and his inheritance is destroyed; but when he has made his peace, his house is built up again, all signs of the king's displeasure are taken away, and every thing appears with a more pleasing countenance; thus, because of our rebellion and treason against God, he hath punished the world for our sakes, and hath made it sensible of his wrath: but now that our peace is made, or rather God having made peace by the blood of his Son, we may justly expect that he will remove all signs of his displeasure and revenge. I remember, upon this subject, what David said to God, when he saw the angel destroy Jerusalem, I have sinned and have done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done? 2 Sam. xxiv. In the same manner, every believer may say to God; Lo, I have sinned, O Lord; I and my brethren have done wickedly; but these inanimate creatures, what have they done? Our sins have defiled the earth; and all that may be objected against heaven is, to have yielded light and assistance to us rebels. Since therefore thou hast blotted out our sins, and pardoned our rebellions, spare these harmless creatures, which cannot be punished but for our sakes.

At present, we may without difficulty understand the afore-mentioned passages of Holy Scripture, and such as tend to the same purpose. For when David and St Paul assure us, That the heavens shall perish, and they shall be changed as a garment, I answer, That they shall perish in respect of their qualities, but not of their substance; and that the change shall not be as when one garment is cast off, and another is taken! but as when the spots and blemishes of an old garment are taken away, and it becomes fresher. When your clothing is grown old, and worn out, if it were in your power to make it become new again, and as beautiful as ever it was, you would never think of seeking for new stuff. That which is impossible to men, is possible with God, Luke vi. And when our Saviour in St Matthew's gospel saith, That the heavens and the earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away, I might affirm, that these words are to be understood comparatively; that is to say, that the heavens and the earth shall pass away, rather than that the words of

God should fail of an accomplishment. Our Saviour confirms this interpretation, when he saith in St Luke's gospel, It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than that one tittle of the law should not be fulfilled. The Holy Scripture is full of such kind of expressions; but I would rather stick to the answers which I have already given to the former text, and say, that the heavens and the earth shall pass away, not in regard of their substance, but only in regard of their qualities and accidents that belong to them.

In St Peter's expressions, I find a double comparison or allusion; the one relates to the tents that are pulled down, when the pieces are taken asunder. This comparison is very proper; for this world is like a great tabernacle, a glorious pavilion. God shall pull off the covering, he shall cut the cords, and separate every part. But he will one day raise it up again, gather every piece, and make it a royal tabernacle full of splendour and glory.

The other comparison is borrowed from goldsmiths, who cast the gold and metals into pots, and then melt them in the fire. Now as they destroy not by this means the gold and the silver, but they cleanse them from the dross and the froth, cause them to appear in all their brightness and beauty, and give them a new shape and form; so the fire of the last judgment shall not consume the heavens and the earth, but shall only give them a new form and greater beauty.

The strongest objection in my opinion, is occasioned by the words of St Peter, The earth and the works that are therein, shall be burnt. But I answer to this, That there is a great difference between burning, and being totally consumed and abolished. If it were in the power of a man whose house is consumed to the ground, to raise it up again from its ruins, and to make it more beautiful and glorious than before, by his word alone, he would never seek for other materials. Now shall I say again, that what is impossible with men is possible with God? He hath already created the world by his word, and he is able to restore it again by the same. Art hath found out methods to make beautiful vessels of melted ashes; and shall not God's hand, unto which all the skill of art, and the strength of nature cannot be compared; be able to gather up the ashes of the earth, and to make of it a body full of glory and light?

From hence you may perceive, how we are to understand, that there shall be new heavens and a new earth: they shall not be new in regard of their substance and matter, but they shall be new in regard of those noble qualities which God

shall give them. When a debauchee leaves his wicked life, and applies himself to the practice of piety and virtue, we commonly say, that he is not the same, but that he is become a new man. Besides, when a man hath cast off his old rags, and put on a magnificent garment, we are wont to say, That he is another man: we shall have much more cause to declare, that the heavens and the earth shall be new, when God shall have renewed them. In short, he shall enrich the world with so many wonderful beauties, he shall fill it full of so much glory and excellency, he shall cause it to be so perfect, that we shall have just reason to look upon it as upon a new world, and to say with the apostle, The old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. I would not have you think, Christians, that this opinion is grounded only upon human reason; it is drawn from the words of St Paul, who, speaking of the earthly and insensible creatures, as may appear by his design, he saith not only that they are subject to vanity, not willingly, but because of him who had subjected them; he understands man, who by his sin and rebellion hath spoiled the world, and corrupted nature; but he adds immediately after, that they hope to be delivered from the bondage of corruption, to be in the glorious liberty of the children of God: afterwards he saith, For we know, that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now: and before he saith, That the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the Son of God. In which words, pray take notice, that St Paul saith not, that these creatures shall be abolished, and totally destroyed, but only that they shall be delivered from vanity, and from the bondage of corruption, unto which the sin of man hath subjected them; and that this blessed deliverance shall be brought to pass at the day of the redemption of our bodies; that is to say, at that day when God shall redeem our bodies from their graves, and raise them up to the highest glory and happiness, which hath been prepared for us from the creation of the world.

Then shall happen that which is wont to be seen at the marriage of a great king, or at a coronation, or at a triumph. For not only the prince and his spouse, and all the court, appear in their richest and most glorious attire, and are decked with their most precious jewels, but on such occasions, the prince's palace is adorned with the richest, with the most magnificent and rarest ornaments, and the town, where this solemnity is kept, shows forth some signs of the public rejoicing. Many places are beautiful with several

rarities; theatres are erected, and triumphant arches; the streets are covered with flowers and tapestry; fires are kindled, and torches are lighted: and there is no corner but shows some expressions of the public joy. Thus when our Lord Jesus Christ shall come down from the clouds of heaven, upon a chariot of triumph, when we shall come to consummate his marriage with, and to crown his spouse, he shall not only appear in his greatest glory, and most divine pomp, but the church also, his spouse, shall be clothed with a garment brighter than the sun, and crowned with an immortal glory. All the blessed saints shall appear in their attire of joy, having palms in their hands, and crowns upon their heads, and myriads of holy angels shall sing round about. At that time, paradise, which shall be his palace and bride chamber, shall be adorned and enriched with all the light and glory which I have already endeavoured to describe to you. The whole world also shall partake of this great glory and celestial pomp. The richest coronations, the most magnificent triumphs, the most stately nuptials, are over in a few hours; therefore the fires of joy are soon extinguished, the ornaments put up in the streets are taken down, the triumphal arches disappear, and the city is to be seen in its wonted dress. But as this glory and joy of the church shall never end, there the world shall for ever and ever bear the signs of it. The ornaments which it shall receive in this joyful day shall never be taken away, and the celestial fires of gladness shall never go out.

Although it is my opinion, that the world shall never be totally destroyed, but that it shall become more beautiful and glorious than before, I shall not undertake to give you a description of its several parts, nor to tell you how it shall be employed. For example, I shall not determine whether we are to understand our Saviour's words in the gospel literally, That the sun shall become dark, and the moon shall not give its light, and that the stars shall fall from heaven; or whether these heavenly bodies shall still continue; whether they shall be decked with a new light and glory, and to what purpose they shall serve, for then we shall be enlightened with a greater light than that of the heavenly bodies. I shall only propose two things. First. That as in the human body there are some members which at present are useful, but then they shall be only for ornament and beauty; likewise in the great world there are many needful things which shall be then of no use; nevertheless, they shall be preserved for the beauty and perfection of the world. Secondly. That as man, the

little world, shall then be more beautiful and perfect than when God first created him, likewise this great world shall receive more beauty, more ornaments and perfection, than when God drew it out of its first chaos. As much difference as there is between the second Adam and the first, between the heavenly paradise, and the earthly, so much shall there be between the first and the second world. So that we shall have good cause to say of this great palace, which is to be destroyed and reared up again by the mighty hand of God, as the holy prophet said of Solomon's temple, which we have already applied to our glorified bodies. The glory of this second house shall be greater than the glory of the first.

Some inquire, whether we shall know one another in this state of eternal glory and happiness: I mean whether the subject shall know his prince and king? Whether the sheep shall know their pastor, and the pastor his sheep? Whether the father shall know his son, the son the father, the husband his wife, and the wife her husband, and so forth?

Though this question is of the number of such as are more curious than needful to be known, nevertheless an answer seems to carry with it some kind of comfort and satisfaction. I should judge that this treatise would not be perfect if I did not say something on this noble subject. But what I shall advance, shall be with the same moderation and reservedness, as I have observed in answering the former questions. For although what I shall speak seems to me very plain and without difficulty, others may view it in a different light, without any prejudice to their salvation. However, this I may affirm, for an infallible truth, that the glory of heaven, as well as grace, will bring nature to perfection, but shall not destroy it. It shall add to it other excellencies, but cannot take away those that it hath already. It shall not abolish any of the faculties, but it shall beautify and enrich them with new ornaments. Therefore, consequently, it shall not take away our memory, which is one of the rarest gifts and abilities of the reasonable soul.

I confess that it is said, that the former things shall be remembered no more, and that they shall come no more into our mind. But this is to be understood of the evils and calamities of this present life. And we are not to understand the words so, that we shall totally forget all the former evils and miseries, and shall not remember to have suffered them. St John saith the contrary, when he represents the angel opening the fifth seal; that he saw under the golden altar, which was before the throne of God, the souls of them who

had been martyred for the word of God, and for the testimony of the truth, crying out with a loud voice, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and revenge our blood upon the inhabitants of the earth? I confess these words may be understood in a figurative sense, as when God saith to Cain, The voice of thy brother's blood cries from the earth unto me: and as St Paul saith, That the blood of Jesus Christ speaks better things than the blood of Abel. However, from hence we may conclude, that the remembrance of the calamities and persecutions that we have endured in this life, is not inconsistent with happiness. This remembrance is so far from prejudicing our felicity, that, on the contrary, it shall increase and enlarge it, and cause us to relish it the more. When the prophet saith, That the former things shall be remembered no more, and they shall never come to mind, he understands, That the former evils shall never be, and that we shall be for ever sheltered from all misery and misfortunes.

I cannot express this by a nobler and more proper example than that of Joseph: when he went out of prison to take the government of Egypt, and had strengthened himself by a rich alliance in marriage, he named his eldest son Manasseh, which signifies forgetfulness, or forgetful; for he said, God hath made me forget all my labour, and my father's house; although this holy man had not altogether forgotten those things; for he knew afterwards his brethren, and told them of the mischief which they had intended against him, and which God had turned to good: but he spoke in this manner, because God had changed his misery and imprisonment into glory and honour. In this sense we are to understand these words, The former things shall be remembered no more; because, instead of the evils and miseries which we endure here below, we shall enter into an eternal glory and happiness. The prophet expounds himself sufficiently in the next words; for when he had said, The former things shall not be remembered, nor come into mind, he adds immediately after, Be ye glad and rejoice in that which I create. The Holy Ghost confirms us in this interpretation in another place, in these words: All tears shall be wiped off from our eyes; there shall be no more sorrow, nor crying, nor pain; but eternal joy and gladness shall be upon our heads.

Since God intends not to destroy those gifts and abilities which he had bestowed upon us in this life, much less shall he abolish our knowledge, which is one of the brightest

beams of glory. This knowledge shall be so far from diminishing or decaying, that it shall then increase more and more, until it comes to the highest perfection. As the air loseth nothing of its twilight at the break of day, when the sun riseth upon our heads; but rather loseth all obscurity and darkness, which the presence of the sun drives away, until it be perfectly enlightened; likewise our understanding shall lose nothing of that light and perfection, which it receives now from the breaking of the day of God's grace; but as the Sun of Righteousness riseth upon it more and more in joy and salvation, it shall perfectly lose all darkness and ignorance by degrees, until it be fully enlightened. From hence we may probably conclude, that we shall know all the persons in heaven, whom we have known here below on earth. For if the glorified ones shall remember the wicked who have tormented them, they must needs remember all believers who have bestowed upon them their alms, and done them good. If it were otherwise the apostle St Paul would not tell the Corinthians, We are your glory, as also you are ours, at the day of the Lord Jesus: and he would not write thus to the Thessalonians, What is our hope, our joy, and our crown of glory? Is it not you before the Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? Verily, you are our glory and our joy. Now if in the state of glory, St Paul should not know the Corinthians and Thessalonians, unto whom he had preached the gospel, how shall they be his joy, his glory and his crown, at the coming of the Lord Jesus? This reason seems to me as clear as the sun. Nevertheless, I cannot affirm, that in heaven we shall know again them whom we have known upon earth by the features of their countenance; for there shall be a wonderful alteration. The faces of all the saints shall be so beautiful, perfect, and full of light and glory, that the most knowing shall not be able to judge them to be the same whom we have seen upon earth. Some, therefore, fancy, that we should know one another by the assistance of our discourse: but our voice shall then be changed as well as our countenance; and it is doubtful whether we shall discourse of the former things which happened on earth; for our chief employment shall be to behold God's face, and to sing forth his praises. I had rather, therefore, affirm, that we shall know one another by an infused knowledge, by which we shall know all things which are possible to be known, and by the light of that glory with which God shall fill our souls. In short, this knowledge shall proceed from no other principle than that

of all the knowledge with which we shall be crowned in that state of glory and perfection.

I am therefore more than fully persuaded that we shall know in heaven our parents, and our friends, and generally all the persons whom we have known here below; but we shall also perfectly know them whom we never knew in the world, and never saw with the eyes of our flesh. We shall know the holy and blessed Virgin Mary, the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, the evangelists, the confessors, the martyrs, and generally, without exception, all the saints who shall be crowned with glory and joy in heaven. There is no person can question, but that, in the celestial paradise, we shall have more knowledge and understanding, than ever Adam had in the earthly. Now when God caused a deep sleep to fall upon him, when he took one of his ribs and formed therewith a woman, he had seen none of this done; nevertheless when his eyes were open, he knew her; therefore he declared his judgment in this manner, This is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh. And shall not we, when God shall rouse us up from the deep sleep of death with the sound of the last trumpet, know the spouse of the Son of God, which he hath drawn out of his side, and moulded with his own precious blood? St Peter, when he was enlightened by a beam of our Saviour's glory in his transfiguration, knew Moses and Elias, whom he had never seen before; and shall not we know all the children of God upon Mount Sion, when we shall be transfigured ourselves, and all shine as the heavenly light, whereof that of Mount Tabor was but an imperfect shadow and representation? But though we shall know in heaven all the persons whom we have known on earth, we shall look upon them in another manner, and love them with another affection; for all that we have of the animal and earthly life shall be totally abolished; and as our knowledge shall be clear and certain, our love shall be pure and heavenly. I am not able to express this better than St Paul doth in these words: Although I have known Christ according to the flesh, nevertheless I know him no more according to the flesh. Christians, consider well these expressions; they will be able to remove all difficulty and doubts out of your minds. We are fully persuaded that all the inhabitants of heaven shall certainly know our Lord Jesus Christ; for how can it be otherwise, but that we must know this glorious Monarch of men, and of angels, whose sacred countenance shall shine as the sun; and who shall sit upon his magnificent throne, about which legions of seraphims

fly, and who shall be there adored for ever by the church triumphant? Nevertheless, St Paul saith, That although he hath known Jesus Christ according to the flesh; that is to say, according to the manner of his low and earthly life, when he lived here on earth; at present he did not know him in the same manner; he did not consider him otherwise, but as he is at present invested with unspeakable glory and splendour. In the same manner, although we shall know all them whom we have known on earth, we shall no more know according to the flesh, that is to say, according to this animal and sensual life; our love shall not be earthly or carnal, but it shall be altogether spiritual and heavenly.

I beseech you, Christians, consider well what St Matthew tells us in chap. xxii. The Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Christ to entangle him with this difficult question,—Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren; and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased; and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother. Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. Our Saviour answers not, That this woman shall belong to none of those husbands, because they shall not know her, nor distinguish her from other women; but he replies to them, You do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God; for in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels of God in heaven. From hence we may conclude, that although in heaven we shall know one another, we shall have nothing of that carnal love which we have at present, and which causeth us to put so much difference between one person and another. A father may know his children: but his love shall not be grounded upon considerations of flesh and blood; he shall love them only because they are amongst the children of God, and the heirs of the kingdom, and because they shall appear in the image of the heavenly Father, clothed with his light, and crowned with immortal glory. Finally, we shall love none but in God, and for his sake, as they shall be in God and God in them. In this manner, it shall not be possible to love them more or less; charity, or love, the queen of virtues, shall then sit upon its throne, and attain to the highest degree of perfection.

If you think seriously upon this, Christians, you shall find

arguments to answer the vain objections of such who say, That if we come to the knowledge of one another in heaven, that will be liable to disturb our happiness; for as it will be comfort and joy to meet there with our parents and friends, in like manner, it will give us trouble and affliction, not to find there all such whom we have formerly loved. We may form and retort the same objection with more reason against those who believed, that we should not know one another in heaven: for we may say also, that, not knowing the persons, we shall not know whether our parents or our friends are there; and this is likely to disturb and trouble the quiet and satisfaction of our minds. But to argue in this gross manner, is to confound heaven with the earth.

Grief and displeasure can never be admitted into a paradise of joy and perfect happiness. In this glorious condition our knowledge shall be so clear, our charity so pure, our love to God so fervent, that as we shall love all things which God shall love, and where his image shall appear; so it shall not be possible for us to love them whom God shall hate, them who shall bear the marks and characters of the devil.

When David was yet here on earth, he said unto God, Lord, do I not hate them that hate thee? I hate them with a perfect hatred; they have been to me as mine enemies, Psal. cxxxix. In the same manner, we shall rather speak in heaven, in the state of perfection, when God shall be in us, all in all, and we shall be all in God. Some there are that inquire, What kind of language we shall speak in heaven? Some reply, That we shall speak the language of angels; grounding their opinion upon what St Paul says to the Corinthians, Though I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

But this is a fantastical opinion; for as the angels are pure spirits, they can have no tongue, nor proper language. I confess, in some holy apparitions, angels have spoken to men; but it was by moving the tongues of their borrowed bodies, or by employing some other corporal organ. Then they spoke in the language of those to whom they were sent, and had no particular or proper dialect. But if angels did speak, their language would excel as much that of men, as the angelic nature excels the human. By the tongues of angels, therefore, our apostle understands an excellent tongue, better than that of men.

Others imagine, that in heaven we shall speak no other language but the Hebrew; because, say they, it is the tongue

which God hath sanctified from the beginning of the world, in which he spoke to the patriarchs and holy prophets, in which he proclaimed his law upon Mount Sinai, in the audience of all the people of Israel, and in which he hath recorded his sacred law with his own finger. They say, that it is the language which Adam spoke in the earthly paradise, in the state of innocency, and which all the inhabitants of the world made use of before God sent among them a division of tongues. And we may also affirm, that it was the language used by our Saviour while he was on earth. For the Syriac, which he commonly spoke as the rest of the Jews, is a dialect of the Hebrew, or kind of corrupted Hebrew. Others are yet of opinion, that we shall then attain to the knowledge of all sciences, and not be ignorant of any kind of languages, but therefore declare the wonderful works of God, as the apostles at the day of Pentecost.

As the Holy Scripture is silent upon the matter, I shall affirm nothing; but in general terms may venture to declare, that as God caused a division of tongues to punish man's insolence and pride, and as the different languages of people is an effect of their sin, it is more certain, that this confusion and difference shall be altogether taken away, and that nothing shall be said in heaven but what shall be very well understood by all the glorified saints. I may add, moreover, that in case we should speak so well all manner of languages which have been in the world, it is nevertheless very likely that we shall all speak but one language, that we may all praise God with the same voice. But whether this shall be the holy language, or another more perfect and majestic, which God shall sanctify for this purpose, we cannot know, until God of his infinite mercy shall have raised us to this state of glory and perfect happiness. From what we have already said, Christians, you may easily understand that our happiness hath three steps or degrees; the first is attainable in this life; the second at the separation of the soul from the body; the third is at the great day of our glorious resurrection. For already in this life, God bestows upon us the first fruits of his glory, and the foretastes of his paradise. The spirit of God, and of his glory, rests at present upon us, which fills us full of an unspeakable glorious joy, and with the peace of God, which passeth all understanding. When our souls depart out of this corrupt and infirm body, God gathers them up into the bundle of life, he introduceth them into the blessed company of the angels and glorified spirits, and admits them to the contemplation of his face,

which is fulness of joy. But in this day of triumph, when Christ shall come down from heaven to judge the quick and the dead, he will advance us both in soul and body, to the highest glory and happiness whereof we are capable. For this reason, the name of glory is ascribed to this high degree of happiness which is promised to us at the blessed appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the 8th chapter of the Romans, where the apostle saith, that the creature was made subject to vanity; not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope; because the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. And in the 3d chapter to the Colossians, he saith, You are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God; when Christ who is your life, shall appear, you shall appear also with him in glory. Therefore this glorious appearing is styled, *A blessed hope;* that is to say, the fulfillings and accomplishments of all that we expect or hope for; as in the 2d chapter to Titus, St Paul saith, We expect the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God, who is the Saviour Jesus Christ.

Then shall be the consummation of the glory of the head and members; for then the Son of God shall cause the damned to feel that almighty power which he possesseth in heaven and earth, and in the depth: he shall discover himself to the faithful in his greatest glory and most divine splendour. Therefore this glorious day of his descent from heaven, with the angels of his power, is mentioned as the first day of his manifestation, of his appearing, and of his kingdom. For this cause, when the Holy Ghost speaks of this day, he styles it, The day of our Lord Jesus Christ, or, the day of our Lord Jesus; as also, the day of the Lord, and the day of God. As it shall be the day of the Lord Jesus, it shall also be our day. Therefore St Paul calls it the day of our redemption; because that in this day our Lord shall redeem our bodies out of their graves, and shall bestow upon both our souls and bodies, Eph. iv., all the fruits of that redemption which he hath purchased for us with his own blood, Rom. viii., and shall raise us up to the highest glory and most perfect happiness, Heb. ix. It is the happy day of consummation of our marriage with the divine Lamb; it is the day of our joy and triumph with the glorified saints and angels; it is the day of our coronation, and of our entrance into our kingdom, when the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords, shall crown us with his own hand, and put us into possession of an empire, prepared for us from the beginning of the world. In a

word, it is the day when we shall come to the Lord Jesus, and be with, as he is with the Father, that we may be all in one.

Because of the glorious and wonderful things that shall come to pass on this day, it is named *The great day.* St Jude calls it thus: When he speaks of the revolted angels, he saith, That God hath reserved them in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. In this manner many understand the words of John, when he describes the foul spirits, and likens them to frogs that he saw coming out of the dragon's mouth, and of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, and saith, They are the spirits of the devil working miracles, which God sent forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty, Rev. xvi.

Lastly. This glorious day is not only called the day of judgment, the day of the Lord, the day of our redemption, and the great day; but oftentimes, without any addition, is styled *the day*, and *that day.* As Heb. x.; Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; not forsaking the assembling ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching. In the epistle to the Thessalonians, You are not in darkness, that that day should surprise you. Thus in the second epistle to Timothy, chap. i., St Paul saith, I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. And when he remembers the good and charitable deeds of Onesiphorus, he prays for him in this manner, The Lord grant unto him, that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day; and in the 4th chapter, speaking of himself, he saith, I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day.

It is so styled, because of its excellency: it is the day of days, the end of all the seasons, the consummation of all ages and times; for after this there shall be no more alteration of days, months and years. Therefore an angel is represented in the Revelations lifting up his hands to heaven, swearing by the living God, who hath created heaven, and all things therein, the earth, and all things in it, and the sea, and the things that are therein, That there shall be no more time: for instead of this inconstant time, which flies away

without leaving any sign of its being, an everlasting eternity shall succeed; an eternity always the same, always blessed with happiness, always glorious and joyful. This divine and magnificent day shall begin at the end of other days, but shall never draw to an end. Therefore St Peter in these words calls it an eternal day; or eternity, 2 Pet. iii., Glory be to the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, both now and for ever, Amen. And in expectation of this day of days, all creatures are groaning and travailing in pain until now; but especially believers, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan in themselves, desiring with an earnest and holy desire to see the breaking of this great and glorious day. It is the end of all the prophecies, and the accomplishment of all God's gracious promises to his people, in all ages of the world; it is the end and reward of our spiritual calling, and fulfilling of all our desires and expectations, and crowning of all our labours, and the highest step of that glory and happiness unto which we hope to arrive.

You, devout and pious souls, who delight in the contemplation of celestial things, I pray consider with me, the accomplishment and the perfection of three kinds of works which have been succeeded by their several rests. The first was that of the creation of the world; for in six days God created the heaven and the earth, and all things in them, and when he had finished his works, and found that they were good and perfect, he rested the seventh day, Gen. i. and ii., therefore he blessed and sanctified it. The second great work was that of redemption; for when our Saviour had fulfilled all the prophecies which mentioned him; when he caused the meaning of all the ancient types and figures to appear in his person and sufferings; when he had fully satisfied the justice of God, and purchased for us with his blood an eternal redemption, he cried out, All is finished, John xix., and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. After this, Christ had nothing more to do, nor suffer, but he is gone into heaven to rest from all his works, Rev. v., and to take possession of all power, riches, wisdom, strength, honour, glory and praise. The third work is that of our glorification; when we shall see the new heavens appear, and a new earth; when our bodies shall be clothed with incorruption and immortality, and united again to our souls; and when, in both soul and body, we shall attain to the highest glory and most perfect happiness; then he that sits upon the throne of eternity shall say with a loud voice, *All is finished*, Rev. xxi.

Afterwards the Sabbath of Sabbaths shall succeed that eternal rest, and that peace which shall never be interrupted by any unhappiness. We may say, that the first rest is that of God the Father, the second belongs to the Son, the third is the rest of the Holy Ghost, that shall then have gathered all the saints together, reared up the house of God to the roof, and perfectly enlightened and sanctified the true Catholic church, from whence shall proceed its eternal glory and happiness; or rather, we may say, that this last rest is the rest of all the three persons of the most holy and glorious Trinity; for then they shall rest from all manner of works for ever and ever, and we in the bosom of their glory; we shall also enjoy an everlasting rest. When the works of creation were finished, the works of redemption were next expected; and after the works of redemption, we hope for the works of our final glorification. But when God shall have brought us all into his glorious rest, and declared, for the third time, from heaven, *All is finished*, we shall then expect nothing either from God's justice, or from his mercy; for all God's enemies shall then be destroyed, and it shall not be possible to add any thing to the infamy of their punishments, nor to the violence of their torments. There shall be no more tears to be wiped away, no more evils to be feared, nor advantages to be expected, nor crowns to receive; for then all the children of God shall be perfectly glorified. They shall enjoy God himself, who shall be their inheritance for ever, and the unfathomable fountain of all their delights; so that it shall not be possible to add any thing to their infinite glory, nor to their eternal happiness. God shall then, if I may so speak, take away all means of expressing any greater liberality and bounty.

Abraham leaped for joy, when he saw the birth-day and humiliation of the Son of God. How should we rejoice, and be transported out of ourselves, when we think upon this glorious day, of the appearing of our great God and Saviour? When with the eye of faith we behold him sitting upon the clouds of heaven, coming to put a period to sin and death, to shut up the devil and his angels in the bottomless pit of hell, to deliver his church from all evils, enemies, and dangers, and to promote it to the highest felicity, and to an everlasting glory.

After this, believing souls, I must draw the curtain, and suffer my pen to fall from my hand; for mine eyes dazzle at the sight of so shining a light, and my soul is surprised at the consideration of so much glory, and so perfect a happiness.

Although I have lengthened this treatise more than I at first proposed to myself, I must needs confess, that whatsoever I have said upon so rich and glorious a subject, falls far short of the truth. But I am persuaded, that there will be here enough for pious and devout souls, who seek not for the ornament of language, nor for the flourishes of rhetoric, but for the true and solid comforts of God's holy word. You, Christians, and believing souls, for whose sake I have undertaken this work, I intreat you, for the glory of God, and for your own salvation, to preserve in your minds the ideas of these things that I have now spoken of. Imprint them in your memories, engrave them upon your hearts as with the point of a diamond, and especially take delight in reducing them to practice, and you shall assuredly find both joy and comfort. Think often upon death; let it be the most familiar and most pleasant subject of your discourse; expect it at every moment, and lead such a life as if death were already upon your lips. Fear not the many troubles of this human life; doubt not but that God hath determined the time and manner of your going out of the world, and that every kind of death of the children of God is precious in his sight. Since you are to live but a short time upon earth, settle not your hearts, but possess your riches and advantages as not possessing them, remembering that the fashion of the world passeth away. Since it is sin alone that makes death appear so terrible to us, hate all manner of vice, and study the practice of piety.

And as there is no person at the hour of death but wishes that he had lived well, think therefore upon your latter end; for that is an excellent preservative aganst sin. If your mind is disturbed with the consideration of those things which shall happen after your decease, learn to rest upon the wise providence of God, that sees into the depths of eternity, that provides for all things, and that draws light out of the greatest darkness. Are you cast upon a bed of sickness and disease? Open the eye of your faith, and you shall see yourselves encompassed about with holy angels, and in the arms even of God himself. Dread not the violence of pain; for God will never forsake you in your grief; he will never suffer you to be afflicted above what you are able to endure. Fancy him not as a dreadful and merciless judge, but look upon him as a gracious and loving Father, who desires not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should repent and live. If death appears to you with a frightful countenance, if it fill you full of terrors, cast your eyes by faith upon the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall see there all the weapons

and armour of his death broken in pieces; you will see there that divine and precious blood streaming forth, which hath satisfied for all our sins, and marked unto you the way of God's eternal sanctuary. Let not the grave that is digging for you terrify you, since the King of Kings has been laid there before you, and filled it with his most divine odours. Let death seem to you never so dreadful, remember that our Saviour hath overcome it by his resurrection. Fear not, therefore, to encounter it; for our great God and Saviour will make you partake of his victory. And that you may cause in your souls an earnest longing for heaven, look upon Jesus Christ there, who is gone to prepare a place for you, and desires that you should be eternally with him, to behold his joy and glory. Fear not the separation of the soul from the body, since death, which shall separate you from yourselves, is not able to separate you from the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, the soul of our souls, the seal of the promises of God, and the earnest of our future inheritance. Instead of looking behind and longing for these perishing advantages, and for honours that can only dazzle the eye, consider that death shall wipe away all tears, remove all your grief, and raise you above all the riches and pageantry of this world; nay, above all the miseries and troubles that cover the face of the earth. That you may be able to follow this death more cheerfully, remember that it draws you out of a place all polluted with sin, and infected with impiety, to transport you into a new heaven, adorned with righteousness and holiness, and perfumed with prayers, praise and thanksgiving, of the glorified saints: remember that it frees you from all remains of corruption, and gives a deadly wound to all your lusts. Mind not so much at the false appearance of death: for to the wicked it is, as it were, the suburbs of hell, the jaws of the bottomless pit, and the beginning of their endless torments; but to you believers, it is the gate of heaven, and entrance into paradise, and a passage to a most happy life. Learn to relish now the joys wherewith your souls shall be for ever satisfied, when God shall crown you with his glory, and make you to drink of the rivers of his pleasure. Since your soul is going to put on a garment of immortality, and to dwell for ever in the palace which God hath built with his Almighty hand, cast off willingly, this wretched, infirm and corruptible body.

Depart willingly out of this earthly tabernacle, which turns of itself to dust. Consider well, that though it fall by death, it shall rise again to the resurrection; and that then it shall

at last become the temple of God, and the tabernacle of his glory. Finally, O religious souls, shut your eyes to the world, and to all the vanities that the world adores, and aspire to the real advantages which God hath prepared for you before the creation of the world, and in which you shall joy when the world shall be no more. Let your precious faith, and your blessed hope, enter into eternity itself, to behold that extraordinary happiness and glory, which God shall accomplish, when he shall bring us both in soul and body into this celestial paradise, to see his face, in which is fulness of joy.

In regard to this perfect happiness, and infinite glory, which never entered into the heart and thoughts of man, it shall never be perfectly accomplished, but at that day when Jesus Christ shall appear from heaven, to be glorified in his saints, and to become wonderful in all believers. Think always upon this glorious day, and the end of all our wishes, the fulfilling of all our hopes, and the perfection of all those designs which God hath purposed in himself from eternity.

You devout souls, who are grieved to see the world prosper, and Satan's empire flourish, to see God's children subject to all the darts of death, take good courage, and rejoice with a holy joy; for shortly all the enemies of God, and of our salvation, shall be punished with an everlasting punishment as from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. Shortly the devil, his angels, his agents and slaves, shall be bound up in chains of darkness, and cast into the lakes of fire and brimstone, and shut up in the bottomless pit. Shortly death shall be no more, and this church of Jesus Christ, whose miseries and afflictions cause you to weep, shall be clothed with unspeakable light and glory; it shall enter with joy and triumph into the heavenly Jerusalem, and you yourselves shall sing with all the glorified armies of heaven.

Since Christ shall come as a thief in the night, and shall surprise all the children of the world unawares, to incline your souls, believers, to the love of God, and expectation of your merciful Lord, behave yourselves in the same manner as you would do if you were now at the eve of this great festival, as if you saw already the dawning of this most happy day. Entertain now the same affection and joy, as if you heard the voice of God, and the trumpet of the archangel, as if the earth was already in a flame, and as if Jesus Christ himself was coming in the clouds of heaven. And as no impure thing shall enter into the heavenly and holy Jerusalem, and

that without holiness no man shall see the face of God, cleanse yourselves, Christians, from all filthiness of the flesh, and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. Forsake all manner of vice; give yourselves over to virtue, and to the practice of good works; imitate the diligence of that faithful servant, that you may not be ashamed at the coming of your great Master. Take heed that ye be not like the wise virgins, that slept as well as the foolish; but watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation; for the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. Redeem the time, for the days are evil; and make haste to put on the garments of righteousness and innocence; fill your hearts with the holy oil of faith, of hope and charity. Take your lamps in your hands, and let your souls shine with a divine light.

In this blessed disposition, let us go and meet our heavenly bridegroom, and hasten his coming, by our prayers and groans. Let our souls be full of love; let them sigh for our divine Jesus; and being moved with the same affections as St John, let us say to him with an earnest desire, Come, Lord Jesus; and if he answers, For certain I come quickly, let the longing of our souls increase more and more, that we may be able to pray more fervently; and let this cry reach up to heaven, Come, Lord Jesus, even come, Lord, come quickly. *Amen.*

XXIX.

Prayer and Meditation for a Believing Soul, that rejoiceth and comforts itself in looking upon death's destruction, and the everlasting and blessed life which we hope to enjoy, both in soul and body, after the resurrection.

O Great Judge of the world, author of life and happiness, thy grace hath bestowed upon me the seeds of immortality, the first-fruits of glory, and the foretastes of everlasting delight. By faith I have a prospect of those joys and felicities of paradise, into which my soul shall enter at its departure out of this wicked world, and into that glory prepared for my body at thy appearing. O raise my mind to eye continually that complete and unspeakable felicity and glory promised to both soul and body, when thou shalt be revealed from heaven with flames of fire, to take vengeance

of unbelievers, and to glorify the saints. Let me not be unmindful of that magnificent throne where thou shalt sit to judge the quick and the dead, before which the greatest princes and monarchs, as well as their meanest subjects and slaves, must appear, to hear the just sentence of their doom, and receive the rewards of their deeds. Grant that I may now rejoice in expectation of that happy day, in which all the enemies of thy glory, and our salvation, shall be destroyed; in which Satan, his angels, and wicked agents, and instruments of his kingdom, shall be bound in chains, and cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, from whence they shall never be released; in which death shall be no more; all the living shall become immortal, and thy church be crowned, and enter in triumph into that magnificent city, built with gold, pearls and precious stones, where thy glory shall continue for ever to enlighten it, and accomplish our happiness. O that I may now expect with comfort and joy, that blessed state where we shall never hunger nor thirst, but be advanced to the condition and perfection of angels, be clothed with light and glory, and being crowned with an eternal felicity, rejoice with the celestial societies of partriarchs, prophets, apostles, confessors and martyrs, and with all the princes and monarchs who have lived and are departed in thy fear and favour, and where we shall be admitted to the vision of God, and be changed and satisfied with his divine likeness. O Lord, grant that I may always have this glorious and happy day in my thoughts, when all thy promises shall be fulfilled, all thy works finished, and our desires and expectations fully accomplished. And because this time and day is unknown to us, give us grace to live always waiting for it, as if we were at the eve of this eternal Sabbath, that our lamps may be trimmed, provided, and burn with the oil of faith, hope and charity, and be ready and awake at thy glorious appearing, clothed with a wedding garment, fit to enter with thee into eternal blessedness. Grant us grace to desire and look for this promised redemption, long to hear the sound of the last trumpet, and behold thy coming in the clouds of heaven, O divine Saviour! that we may ascend to meet thee, and welcome thy glorious appearance! O Lord, forgive our impatient wishes, and hasten that day for the elect's sake. Come with thy powerful angels, and the ministers of thy heavenly court, to execute justice on thine enemies, and deliver thy servants. Come and put an end to this wicked world, infested with sin, and subject to corruption and vanity, and purge the heavens and the earth from all pollution. Come

and take vengeance for the innocent blood of thy martyrs, shed by anti-christ and his cruel agents; bind the devils in chains of darkness, and shut them up with death for ever in the bottomless pit. Lord Jesus, have pity on the cries and sufferings of thy distressed people. Come and deliver them out of this cruel Egypt, out of this abominable Babylon, where they continue in captivity. O merciful Lord! is it not time that thou shouldst bring us to thy celestial Canaan? Give us to taste of the milk and honey of the most refined joys and comfort, and introduce us into thine holy Jerusalem, the city of peace and everlasting rest. Come, therefore, and wipe away the tears, and stop the crying of thine afflicted people. Take them out of this infamous prison, open to them the gates of thy magnificent palace, clothe them with light, and perfect thy salvation, and their happiness. We have been a long while contending with our spiritual and temporal enemies, in our tedious and troublesome journey through the world, and at a distance from thee; we now long to be nearer to thee, O wonderful Redeemer! who hast accomplished all thy works, and that of our redemption, by thy blood and sufferings. Perfect also, we beseech thee, that of our glorification; receive us and thy church into that complete felicity prepared for us from the beginning of the world, and purchased with thy precious blood and sufferings. O merciful God! admit us to that state where we have nothing to fear, nothing to desire, and nothing to wish for, but be always employed in praising thine infinite bounty and mercy. Join our voices with the anthems of the holy angels, that, with the blessed saints, we may be able to say, Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; for death is swallowed up in victory, and the grand accuser of our brethren is shut up in the bottomless pit, which accused them before our God day and night; and they have overcome him by the blood of the Lamb, and have not loved their own lives unto death. Unto him, who hath loved and washed us from all our sins in his blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God his Father, to him, I say, as to the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be glory, power, and dominion for ever.

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